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O. A. Brewster

ORESTES A. BROWNSON'S

EARLY LIFE:

FROM 1803 TO 1844.

BY

HENRY F. BROWNSON.

DETROIT, MICH.

H. F. BROWNSON, PUBLISHER.

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BROWNSON'S EARLY LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

"I HAVE often thought," says Dr. Johnson, "that there has rarely passed a life of which a judicious and faithful narrative might not be useful." It may be added that the usefulness of the narrative becomes greater in proportion as the life has been one of activity, whether of body or of mind, whether of intellect or of heart.

It is in the hope of usefulness that the present biography is written, and the serious reader will scarce fail to see the moral which it teaches, even though it has not been deemed necessary to preach it at every page, but rather by a full and faithful narrative enable him to extract it for himself.

There can be no question but what the publishing of memoirs and correspondences has been greatly overdone. The curiosity to know the details of the private life of every one who is distinguished or talked about; the vulgar craving for admission to the secrets which it is expected will be revealed; the malicious delight at the unmasking of the imposing characters of

public history; the satisfaction of indolence, supplied by a kind of reading which approaches to the familiarity of ordinary conversation, and other like feelings have induced a great number to purchase biographical works, where only a few selected them for purposes of gaining information of value. Fontenelle says that the Marquis de l'Hospital (the Paris mathematician) inquired of some English visitors whether Newton ate, drank, and slept like other men.

It is not the object of the present volume to present a daily record of private life, but rather a history of thoughts made public, in the order of their conception or publication, only so far obtruding the details of rather an uneventful private existence as they may seem likely to serve the purpose of making distinctly apparent the character and surroundings of the one who is the subject of the biography.

Rarely has a life been written that has not been defective, on the one hand, by the writer not being sufficiently conversant with him whose memory he wishes to perpetuate, or on the other hand, by his familiar connection with the departed, he has become partial, and if he does not set down some things in malice, he will extenuate others, or, at least, be suspected of doing so. A barrier against partiality has, to some extent, been introduced into the present work, by the insertion of frequent short extracts from my father's own papers or writings published at the time to which they refer, and occasionally of letters from those with whom he was connected in friendship, politics, or business. Those letters are generally intended to serve a double purpose, to aid the biography by making it more varied, and by

furnishing light on its several parts, and also to contribute, though in a very limited degree, to complete our knowledge of New England literature and religion during a very active and important period in their history.

Orestes Augustus Brownson was born at Stockbridge, Windsor County, Vermont, on the 16th day of September, 1803. He and his twin sister were the youngest children of Sylvester Augustus Brownson, a native of Hartford County, Connecticut, of which portion of the country the Brownsons were among the earliest settlers. Their mother, Relief Brownson was a daughter of Jotham Metcalf, of Keene in Cheshire County, New Hampshire, one of the prettiest villages in New England, situated on the Ashuelot River about twenty miles above its junction with the Connecticut. Stockbridge is on the White River, which also falls into the Connecticut, but higher up and on the opposite side. It was first settled in 1783 and could hardly count one hundred inhabitants at this time. Rough and mountainous, its soil afforded good pasturage; and a short distance eastward the scenery is highly picturesque, presenting to view some of the best landscapes in this country.

The names first selected for the twins were Daphnis Augustus and Daphne Augusta; but a merciful Providence preserved the infant boy from the infliction, and Orestes was substituted for Daphnis, whilst his sister received the names first proposed, under the influence of which she was always, though she lived to be ninety years of age, below the medium height of women. The father and mother were both very tall, and Orestes attained to something more than six feet, but never to his father's height.

The death of Sylvester left his widow in straitened circumstances ; but she struggled patiently and cheerfully to keep her children together as long as she could. Six years afterwards, she was forced to yield the two youngest to kind friends in the neighborhood, who offered to take them and bring them up as their own. The separation of the twins was so painful that Aunt Daphne lately in speaking of it said that she looked back on it as one of the great griefs of her life. Orestes went to live in the town of Royalton, five or six miles north of Stockbridge with an aged couple of plain honest country people supporting themselves by their own labor on a small farm. They were not very religious in their practice, though strict in their morals. They had been brought up congregationalists, and taught their young charge the shorter Catechism, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, and inculcated truthfulness, honesty, industry, and the observance of the Sabbath. Their library consisted of a London edition of the Bible, Watts's *Psalms and Songs*, *The Franklin Primer*, Edwards's *History of Redemption*, and two or three other volumes.

Without companions of his own age, the child, early learning to read, devoted his leisure time to earnest study of the books within his reach, and which gave a permanent direction to his mind. From the old folks with whom he lived he acquired a paramount love of truth ; from the scenery around him a love of nature's beauties and a patriotic attachment to his boyhood's home ; from the Bible and *History of Redemption*, a love of religion as the matter of chief importance in life. These were ever after the three most distinctive marks of his personality.

In his early childhood, however, his religious notions were very vague. As to morals, the teaching of all religious denominations in New England was quite uniform, lying was abominable; to steal the value of even a pin was a sin of great enormity; and no one who called himself a christian would willingly let the sun set on his wrath. But religious belief was as various as the numerous sects which abounded,—Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, Universalists, and Christians, besides deists and atheists. Every one, old and young, took more or less part in the religious discussions between these professors of various theories; but Orestes was inclined to look with the greatest favor on the Congregationalists; for the puritans of New England “retained a conception of the Church of Christ, held that Christ had himself founded a church, established its order, and given it its ordinances, and taught that it was necessary to belong to it in order to be saved.” *

Referring in later life to his childhood days, he said: “I grew up a healthy, active, well-made, and an unusually strong boy. I never begged, I never stole the value of a pin, and would have starved or frozen to death sooner than I would have done either, I had no vicious tendencies and think I was kindly disposed, and my heart swelled and my eyes overflowed if any one spoke a gentle word. There are vicious and criminal poor, but we are very wrong when we class the very poor generally with the criminal or dangerous classes, I have seen with the poor a self-denial, a strict sense of justice, a resistance to temptation, an heroic virtue, which I have never found in the more prosperous classes.

* Brownson's Works, vol. 5, p. 9.

"I had no schooling, but I had early learnt to read, and I cannot remember when I did not know my letters, and also a child's prayer, which I never forgot to say at night before going to sleep. Good reading became my greatest delight, and my greatest want was books. I gathered through the day in a bit of woods, pine-knots which did not decay with the trunks to which they belonged, to make a light by which I could lie on the hearth and read during the long winter evenings. I had a book in my hand whenever I had a leisure moment.

"I had access to no public library, and none of the people into whose houses I could enter had many books, and no one had what would now be called a private library; but such books as they had were at my service, and it is astonishing how many valuable and standard works there can be picked up, one here and one there in almost any neighborhood in our country. I found with one gentleman the English classics of Queen Anne's reign, with another some 50 volumes of the English poets, with another a work on universal history, Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, and Pope's Homer, with still another various monographs of American history, the planting of the colonies, wars with the Indians, Robinson Crusoe, Philip Quarles, and the Arabian nights. I devoured them all, but no book with more intense interest than the Bible. At first, of course, I understood very little of what I read, either gave it no meaning or a child's meaning; yet I enjoyed them. I have had my joys and my sorrows, but I have never known or imagined on earth greater enjoyment than I had as a boy lying on the hearth in a miserable shanty reading by the light of burning pine-knots some book I had just borrowed. I

felt neither hunger nor thirst, and no want of sleep, my book was meat and drink, home and raiment, friend and guardian, father and mother.

"There were in those days few children's books and none of them came in my way, for which I have been thankful. Old people may read children's books, and find recreation in them; but they are unprofitable reading for children. It is a damage to children to have thought made easy for them. The earlier their intellects are taxed, and the harder they are obliged to struggle to find some meaning in what they read the better it is for them. Their minds grow by exercise and become strong; but children's books feed their young minds on pap and panado, and keep their mental digestion always weak and incapable of relishing even in after life strong, healthy, and invigorating food. Hence in our day we are obliged to dilute literature for grown up men and women, and write novels or romances, and to take care that we do not overload them with thought. We no longer train our children to be men, thinking men, or as Emerson says, men thinking. We do their thinking for them, what little thinking there is, and keep them children in understanding all their life-time. I think it was a great advantage to me that I read books beyond my age, and could think, reason, reflect before I had a beard on my upper lip.

"I learned nothing, and was in no position to learn any thing of the conventionalities of life. I was bashful, awkward, blundering, ill at-ease if I found myself even in a humble employment among people who were my social superiors. With really high-bred people I could get along passably well, for their manners were simple

and unaffected, and they knew the art without displaying it of putting me at my ease. Even to this day, I am *gêné* with shoddy and petroleum."

He was an industrious and studious youth, by no means wanting in natural ability and quickness of apprehension. He had more than ordinary dexterity of hand, and suffered no one of his age to surpass him in any kind of manual labor; but he was not a favorite sought after by his companions. He was not wholly insensible to this fact, but happily it did not disturb him much.

As he grew up, he was able by his labor and handicraft to earn a living with a little leisure daily to indulge his passion for reading. Other passions were yet unawakened, and the boy verging on manhood, was serene and contented; and thought this the best of all possible worlds. He had no envy or bitterness, was not at all disturbed by seeing others richer, more prosperous, or more honored than himself. His only want which he could not sufficiently gratify was the want of books; but with this exception, he felt as rich as a lord and as happy as a king.

The approved philosophy of the day tells us that the way to make men happy is to multiply their wants to the greatest possible extent,—and the glory of modern civilization is that it succeeds in doing it,—that the man who has no wants will be stimulated to no exertion, and that the man who makes no exertion is inactive, lifeless, no better than a log. It does not pretend that our modern civilization does not develop a dozen wants to one that it satisfies, but contends that a man who has a dozen wants is twelve times greater than the man who has only one; and consequently scouts the old philosophy

which bids us, if we would make a man happy, study to diminish his desires, not to increase his possessions.

Orestes did not find the new philosophy in his books, nor even the word civilization, except as applied to manners or court breeding. He was not civilized, for he was "inland bred" and had not been brought up in polished society, or with people of refined and courtly manners. Yet he enjoyed the goods the gods gave him. He had not wealth; but he had health, marvellous strength, activity, industry, capacity, and no bad habits. True, he had his sufferings, his failures, and his humiliations, and might have been warned by experience; but youth has the happy faculty of regarding what is past as having never been, and in all periods of life sufferings remembered are sweet. If, as Dante says,

—Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria,*

why may we not say too:

—Nessun maggior piacere
Che ricordarsi del tempo misero
Nella felicità?

At any rate, the purest and sweetest, as well as the most lasting pleasures of life are the simplest and cheapest, and such as are within the reach of the low no less than the high, the poorest no less than the richest.

When Orestes was fourteen years of age, his mother left Vermont with her children and went to live at Ballston Spa in Saratoga County, New York. Here there was an academy, which he attended, and in which he acquired some Latin and less Greek, and attained to

* Misery's saddest thought is the memory of past joy.

a fair knowledge, as it was then considered, of the usual branches of English education. Here also, in October, 1822, he became a member of the Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Pastor at Ballston Spa was Reuben Smith, a man of good education, and a kindly disposition, who would rather mitigate than exaggerate the asperities of Calvinism. At the time of joining the Presbyterians, Orestes had left the academy and worked as apprentice, and then as a journeyman, in James Comstock's printing office at Ballston Spa. The next year, 1823, he began teaching school in the village of Stillwater, in the same county.

CHAPTER II.

A PRESBYTERIAN.

ORESTES hoped when he joined the Presbyterians that his religious doubts would terminate; that he would now find a guide to direct him in the way of salvation.

He was prepared to accept the direction of such guide, and yielded himself to ecclesiastical authority with the blind obedience of a Jesuit. He endeavored to mould his thoughts and sentiments after the model prescribed by his church. In "The Convert" he has related his Presbyterian experience; but he also recorded in pages which were never intended to be read by another his feelings and reflections at that time. As it is the aim of these pages to represent him precisely as he was, it will greatly aid this purpose to present the reader with large extracts from his diary.

On the last day of the year in which he had embraced the Presbyterian profession, he wrote: "Now ends another year Reflect O my soul, on what has employed thee during this year,—on what character thou hast established and what thy general course of conduct. Canst thou look with pleasure on the scenes that have occupied thy attention? Hast thou done nothing which causes shame and regret? Nothing which makes thee mourn and condemn thyself as vile in the sight of God—nothing which makes thee abhor thyself 'in dust and ashes' and cry 'unclean, unclean'? Yes, I have sinned every day, every hour, yea, and every breath has been drawn in iniquity: every thought, and every imagination of my heart has been evil, only evil, and that continually. And yet thou dost exist? What a mercy! Sinned every breath, and yet among the living? Art thou not lost in contemplation of that Power which has preserved thee? Canst but exclaim 'thou art all mercy, O Love Divine, who didst not cast me off and appoint my portion with them that go down into the pit'? Dost thou not feel thy heart glow with gratitude to this great Preserver? Yes, for he hath not only preserved my life and loaded me with unnumbered temporal blessings, but has taken my feet from a horrible pit and placed them on a sure foundation. Yea, sought me dashing my speculative brains against the rocks of infidelity, bound up my wounds, and given me a new song, even of praises to the Most High God.

"But, ah! how little do I feel to praise my God! how cold! how dead! for such unparalleled goodness! My heart how deceptive yet! what vileness remaining! how opposed to all good!

"How long shall I love vanity and follow after empty wind? Shall I never apply myself to wisdom, nor seek after instruction? Just Heaven, since thou hast condescended to open my eyes, still in thy wisdom purge them!"

"Saturday, January 18th, 1823.—Dead is every sense of pleasure. Feel no life in religion. Can apply no promise of God, none. Hope only because I know he is faithful who has promised. Think on Christian perfection. Believe the carnal nature always remains, and that nature is prone to sin, not only prone to sin, but it is evil. All its thoughts and imaginations are evil, only evil, and that continually. Believe I have no righteousness but in the Lord. Believe Christ as the Great Head laid down his life for the salvation of the sheep; that he, as the Great Sponsor, bore our iniquities in his own body, that he fulfilled that law which man never could. Believe that as man by the Fall became corrupt there was a necessity of something more than barely an atonement for Adam's sin. Because I live ye shall also, the words of Christ my only hope."

The next day he tried to arouse himself to the delight of piety and the pleasure of hope, and he wrote:

"Sunday evening, 19th.

"Sing to the Lord all ye children of men. Praise him all ye nations of the earth, for his munificence extends to all his works. Day unto day sheweth us his goodness. Night unto night teacheth his wisdom and sovereignty. Feel my bosom glow with gratitude to this great Dispenser of every thing which adds happiness to man. By whose power shines yonder firmament with living sapphires? Who exhales the vapours and scatters

the snowy morsels and binds in frozen chains the rivers and lakes? Now methink although nature lies dead and all tuneful voices are silent, I shall yet see all covered in living green, while sweet music fills every grove. A little later I look and think though this body shall be laid in the grave and moulder to dust a triumphant morn shall arise, when new life shall awake every atom endowed with immortality."

After writing these words he probably attended evening service and listened earnestly to the Presbyterian preacher; for his next words are as full of gloom as those of the night before.

"11 o'clock, Sunday evening.

"How changeable the mind of man! One hour he appears happy in future prospects, the next buried in despair. When I view man in himself I feel all the dire forebodings of Hell. What an inconsistent piece is man! Made up of joy and grief, hope and despair. O contemplation! how sad grows my bosom when pensive I court thy humble shade! When thinking over all the miseries of life how thou raisest the swelling tear to sympathize with others' woes! Now to rest—but O my God, grant that these sad forebodings which hang over my soul may disappear and one ray of hope may beam afresh upon a melancholy heart."

At other times he returned from the Presbyterian service in a healthier mood. Thus he writes on the 25th of May, 1823. "Attended church.—A most precious day. There was exhibited that love, that self-moved love that gave a saviour to a lost and perishing world: there was shewn the death and sacrifice of the spotless Lamb, the Son of God the Mighty Maker of all we be-

hold. O what heart will not weep when all exposed to view the glorious sufferer? Who can repress the tear when up Calvary's rugged way we see him fainting beneath the ponderous wood, or extended between the heavens and the earth? O sin, what hast thou done? Was it not enough to hurl from heaven legions of angels? Must thou rage till the Son, only begotten Son, of the Father descends and dies an ignominious death on the cross? Tremble, O my soul, as thou dost contemplate. All other deeds but this the sun permitted to pass; but ashamed to see his Maker dying he hid his face and shrouded the world in darkness! O hide thy face in shame and confusion, for thou hast murdered the King of Heaven and he forgives thee, grants thee pardon, and bids thee live! O adore his goodness, love his mercy, and praise him for ever!

"Let Heaven and earth and all creation join to raise one ardent hymn to the triune God."

At this time the neophyte Orestes, in spite of his mental uneasiness began to think of entering the ministry. He was strongly inclined to undertake the mission of Christ to the heathen. On Friday, May 30th, 1823, he writes: "That infidels should oppose the carrying of the gospel to the heathen is not to be wondered at; but that persons wishing to be considered friendly to the cause of Christ should do so argues no small degree of misconception and depravity. Misconception as relates to the real situation of the heathen; and depravity, in being unwilling to make any exertions for their welfare.

"But we are told the heathen cannot be converted; all exertions are vain; they have their religion, their manners and customs, they seek no change, 'they are

joined to their idols, let them alone'; and if you have anything to bestow for benevolent purposes, clothe the naked and feed the hungry of your own country. Charity begins at home. Convert the practical heathen of your own streets before you think of carrying the gospel to other nations. But let those who make these objections lay aside their prejudices for a moment and candidly examine a few facts with regard to the objection, 'The heathen cannot be converted.' We appeal to the annals of the missionaries; we point to Otaheite, to South Africa, to the most distant isles; we will show you the fire consuming their gods while the gospel waves her olive wand before which flee with hurried pace the horrible crimes infanticide, human sacrifices, and the most flagrant lusts; we will show you a heathen renouncing the gods, the religion of his fathers, foregoing the pleasures of his country, kindred and caste, embracing a strange system of salvation, even salvation by Jesus Christ, and simply inquire if the heathen have not been converted."

A week later, his reflections had taken a different turn, and he looks on foreign missions with a less hopeful eye. He seems to think the warring sects had better settle their differences at home, and decide there what is the gospel, the doctrine and practice, to be offered to the benighted heathen. For he writes on Friday, June 6th, 1823: "Much has been said respecting foreign missions, and it has been very unpopular to say anything against them. The experiment has been long tried. What are the fruits? Now we are decidedly in favor of the spread of the gospel, and we believe the heathen and the uttermost parts of the earth are given to Christ. We believe

in the exercise of all means that tend to ameliorate their condition. But we see little reason to support the present missionary system, because we think the situation of the heathen will not be made better. We have paid some attention to reports from our missionary establishments and candidly confess we see but little to approve. That system of religion which is taught them must certainly be productive of no good consequences. What are its fruits at home? What sober reflecting man can view the divisions, the discordant views disseminated by the disciples of Calvin and Arminius and not feel his bosom glow with honest indignation at their baneful effect? Can he, then, wish it to be carried to those who are deplorable enough already?"

When Brownson became a member of the Presbyterian Church, he endeavored sincerely to conform to its discipline and honestly to submit his reason to its doctrine; but we have seen in the extracts made from his writing at the time how his mind rebelled against the harsh teaching of Calvin, and he tells us in "The Convert" how little the narrow spirit of the Presbyterian discipline satisfied his conception of justice or humanity.

When he discovered to his pastor his repugnance to the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation, that God foreordains the wicked to sin necessarily that he may damn them justly, that minister acknowledged that he found the doctrine hard and revolting to nature, and assured him that he had endeavored, and well-nigh succeeded in his endeavor, to have the doctrine modified or rescinded altogether in the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church two years previously, and advised his young friend not to reflect on or to question the

truth of the Presbyterian belief, nor to allow himself to read anything touching the grounds of his faith. He was further assured by many Calvinists that the only way they could retain their faith, or even their belief in revelation, was by refusing even in their own minds, to reason on the subject.

All very well, if he could but assure himself that in sacrificing his reason on the altar of religion, that religion was divine and authoritative; but there was the rub. Presbyterianism was confessedly of human origin and fallible in its teachings; hence its authority at best could be no higher than that of reason. There was in his mind an irreconcilable dualism, or perpetual antagonism of reason and religious belief, as there is in the mind of every Protestant who believes any more of Christianity than may be asserted by the purest rationalist. The struggle can only end and peace reign in the mind by the surrender of one belligerent, and in this case reason won, and rejecting revelation, young Brownson rejected so-called Orthodoxy for liberal Christianity, and at the beginning of the year 1824, at the age of 20, avowed himself a Universalist.

He had, moreover, at this time become sad, gloomy, depressed, and disposed to rail at the world and all things therein. It was all wrong, a bad world in which all things were out of place. Why should there be high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned? Hath not God made of one blood all the nations of men? Did he not hear it read every Fourth of July that all men are created equal? Why do they not remain equal? Why was he the poor miserable paria that he was? and his neighbor with blood precisely the color of his a high-caste

Brahmin? "I am amiable and honest, I have intelligence, and even some learning; I have wronged no one, and have helped the needy as far as in my power; I am and have been a burden to no one; from my earliest distinct recollection I have earned my living and paid my way in the world. Yet nobody heeds me, nobody loves me, nobody cares for me, and were I to die there are none to mourn, or even to miss me.

"In one country, rank due to the violences, robbery, piracy, successful crime in peace or war, of some sort, practised by nearer or remoter ancestors, is worshipped and the crowd throw up their caps and hurrah with all their lungs as it rides or rolls by; in another country, as our own for instance, titles are not run after indeed, but wealth, more frequently the veriest shadow of wealth, no matter how got or how used, is the real god, the omnipotent Jove, of modern idolatry. The man is nothing without his trappings. Humble virtue is commended in words, for are we not Christians? —but disdained, despised, and cast out to die of cold, hunger, and nakedness. Get money, the spirit saith, get rich, no matter how, by gambling in stocks, by false pretenses, by extortion, by swindling, cheating, feeing lawyers, buying up legislators, corrupting incorruptible courts of justice, and you will be great, honored and followed. Add to this that out of some portion of the money you have contrived to transfer from the pockets of others to your own, you found a seminary, endow a professorship, or when you are old, health is failing, death is approaching, and you have no heirs, and cannot carry your money with you or enjoy it longer, take care, with the sounding of trumpets, beating of drums, fan-

faronade and bluster, to dispose of your wealth to the poor, but so that the real poor and needy will receive no benefit from it, and count with certainty on your apotheosis, and that the old world and the new will unite to do honor to your lifeless remains. Behold your gods, O England and America! Thy gods, O Anglo-saxondom, are mammon and cant,—cant pious, cant liberal, cant philanthropic.

“Call you this God’s World? To me it seems more like the devil’s world, in which Ahriman, the prince of darkness, is supreme. If God made it, and is all good and all powerful, why does he suffer it to be governed, ruined rather, turned topsy-turvey by his enemy whom he could crush, extinguish, with a look? why, if he made all equal, and is equally good to all, does he suffer inequality to prevail everywhere? If he is good, the good in itself, and is the maker of heaven and earth and all things therein, visible and invisible, whence comes evil?” Evidently he was losing his wits, and to what length his madness did carry him will soon be told. There was no one by to tell him that evil is neither a principle nor a creature, and has only a negative existence, originating in the abuse by creatures of their freedom, nor to bid him look to the end and see the final consummation and adjustment of all things. What then was he to think? What could he do? “I am nobody,” he continues, “and if I venture to say anything, the only answer is, he is a poor devil, has not a red cent in his pocket,—heed not his sayings.”

CHAPTER III.

A UNIVERSALIST.

EARLY in the year 1824, Brownson went west with the purpose of making Detroit his future home. The whole territory of Michigan had then a population of 17,000 inhabitants, of whom from eleven to twelve hundred were in the city of Detroit. Here, for the first time in his life, he saw a Catholic church, the old St. Anne's, long since destroyed, though succeeded on another site by a church of the same name. Detroit is and was then a pleasant and healthy city, barring the damp chilly winds of spring time, which are abominable. Brownson, however, lived at Springwells, about eleven miles from Detroit, on the River Rouge, where he began to teach a school.

The River Rouge was little more than a cess-pool of malaria in August and September, and he used to say that he could see the fever and ague spawn on that stream thick enough to cut with a jack-knife. During the latter part of 1824 and a great part of 1825, Brownson was confined to his room and even to his bed with so severe illness that his recovery was hardly expected; and for many years after he had occasional attacks of malarious fever, or fever and ague. When he recovered, in the Fall of 1825, he applied to the Universalist general convention, which met that year in Hartland, Vermont, for a letter of fellowship as a preacher; upon receipt of which he began preaching in his native county and the adjoining counties of Windham and Rutland, as opportunity offered. At the same time he continued his

studies preparatory to his ordination as an evangelist, until the following summer, when he was "at a session of the New Hampshire Universalist Association holden at Jaffrey, N. H., June 15, 1826, set apart to the work of the ministry by public solemn ordination." *

From this time until near the close of 1829, a little over three years, Brownson preached and wrote as a Universalist minister;—for a short time in New Hampshire and Vermont, and then in New York at Fort Ann and Whitehall, in Litchfield, Herkimer County, then a year in Ithaca, a few months in Geneva, and about a year at Auburn.

He called himself a Christian, though of the liberal sort ; but he denied all divine revelation, the divinity of Christ, and a future judgment. Man, he said, in addition to an intellectual and social, should be considered a religious being. Whether he was indebted to education or to nature for this quality, it was evident from experience that he possessed it ; and the philosopher that should overlook it in his moral disquisitions or in his attempts to discover a correct system of ethics, would but half perform his work. "Man, wherever beheld, no matter in what age or in what country, recognizes an over-ruling power on whom he is dependent and to whom he believes himself to owe allegiance. And indeed such is his situation, such the constitution of his nature, and such the character of his wants, of his hopes and fears, that a large share of his happiness has been found to flow from a consciousness of this dependence and the acknowledgment of this allegiance. Sensible of the mutability of every sublunary object, convinced

* MS Certificate, signed Edward Turner, Moderator ; Charles Hudson, Clerk.

that it is vain to trust 'the arm of flesh,' that his brother is one thing to-day and another to-morrow, he asks for some more powerful arm on which he can lean and find support, for some being who is the same 'yesterday, to-day, and forever,' into whose bosom he can pour the various emotions by which he is agitated, and to whose wisdom and goodness he can commit the disposal of all that concerns his felicity."

The question, what is God? he wrote, "is involved in impenetrable darkness. Thousands of answers have been given, but all are equally unsatisfactory. Whether the mighty energy, the mysterious power, which pervades the whole of nature and enables the universe to present its various and ever-varying phenomena, be a Being separate from matter or inherent in it; whether it produced and arranged the vast machine, or be the result or aggregate of all the laws by which matter is actuated; whether it acts by intelligence or a blind necessity—are questions which baffle all our powers to answer, and which is the correct, man cannot by all the faculties nature has given him, ever ascertain.

"If then," he continues, "he knows so little of God, how can he pretend to explain the mode of his existence, or state the number of persons who participate his Divinity? From the study of nature, he cannot ascertain that there is a God, much less that God exists in a three-fold form, or in other words, that there are three persons in the God-head, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, equal in power and glory, the same in substance, perfectly distinct and independent of each other, and yet constituting but one God. Nature never taught this, or that part of nature which is open to *our* view, never taught and can never

assure us it is true. If true, the evidences of its truth are not found among things which we know, nor with which, by our own powers, we can become acquainted." *

His conception of faith and view of the authority of the Bible may be gathered from the following passage from the same essay. "We have the bible. We are told the bible is the word of God. Be it so. We have no disposition to question its inspiration or its divine authenticity. But for the sake of illustrating our agreement, we will assume a case. Say then it is ascertained that water is a compound of hydrogen and oxygen—that it is ascertained by a variety of experiments which have established its certainty as positively as any thing we can establish. Now should the bible declare water to be a simple substance, which should we, which ought we, according to the nature of evidence, to believe? Believe that water is a compound, is what I should do in such a case though ten thousand bibles declared to the contrary.

"All faith must arise from intuitive perception, experience, or from testimony. Intuition is undoubtedly the strongest evidence we can have. This is what irresistibly compels us to believe our own existence The bible comes under the third class of evidence. It is the evidence of testimony; not of experience nor of intuition. Consequently can never authorize us to believe what contradicts our experience or our intuitive perception. But; it is replied, 'God cannot lie, therefore whatever he says must be true.' We grant it. 'But have we any right to inquire into the reasonableness or unreasonableness of what the bible teaches?' Certainly; for, though God cannot lie, man, who can and often does lie, is the

* Gospel Advocate, vol. vii, pp. 9 and 21.

only authority we have for believing the bible is the word of God." * And further on: "The study of nature then will probably teach us more correctly and more fully what is proper to be done than the bible, which must adapt itself to the age in which it is given, without making the necessary provisions for the ages to follow. If we wish information respecting God and a future state, we may read the bible and depend upon what it says, providing it assert no absurdity or thing inconsistent with itself or with what we know. I conclude, therefore, that the bible is no authority for an unreasonable doctrine, though it may be for a doctrine which is above or beyond reason." †

The doctrine of "imputed righteousness," he could not accept. It means, he said "that as a righteous being, God could not justify us for our works, he must, therefore, keep us eternally condemned unless he can find a substitute for good works. That is to say, God could not pronounce the sinner just *de facto*, nor by any existing law, so he introduces faith *ex post facto*, and declares that he who will believe shall be accounted just or righteous, notwithstanding so far as the fact is concerned, he is unjust, still a sinner.

"I know not by what rules the court of heaven is governed, but I believe every wise man would despise an earthly court, guilty of such trifling, not to use a harsher term." ‡

When at Ithaca in 1828, he wrote various articles for "The Gospel Advocate," the principal organ of the New York Universalists, and published at Auburn. At the end of that year, its editor, the Reverend L. S.

* Ib. pp. 37-38.

† Ib. pp. 55-6.

‡ Ubi supr., p. 170.

Everett removing to Charlestown, Massachusetts, was succeeded by the Reverend O. A. Brownson, who also took charge of the Universalist congregation at Auburn, and left Ithaca for the equally pleasant village at the head of Cayuga Lake.

At first he enjoyed the confidence of his co-religionists, but before mid-summer of 1829, his independent and fearless habit of publishing his views as soon as generated in his own mind, caused him to be looked on with some suspicion by the members of his sect, correspondents began to charge him with deism, and although his arguments against hell-fire endeared him to Universalists, his subjecting the Bible to the test of his own reason, not only for its interpretation, but even for its acceptance or rejection, was looked on with distrust and sometimes reproof.

In reference to such he wrote what he called "My Creed," as follows :

"Almost every man has a creed. There are few who do not worship their creed with more devotion than they do their God, and labor a thousand times harder to support it than they do to support truth. Now I do not like to be singular, and I know not why I may not have a creed as well as other folks. But—if I publish my creed, consistency may require me to defend it, and when I have once enlisted self-love in its defence, I may become blind to the truth, and may choose rather to abide my first decision than to admit I have once decided wrong. But a creed I must and will have, and my readers shall know what it is.

"My creed shall consist of FIVE points, and shall embrace all the essentials of true religion ; and further-

more I wish to premise, that my creed was not adopted merely to-day, but has been cordially embraced, and of its correctness I have had no doubts, for at least nine months, though I may not have lived agreeably to its injunctions. But we are all frail creatures, and it is very difficult to find no discrepancy between a man's faith and his practice. Moreover, I would allege in behalf of my creed, that it is plain, easy to be understood, and withal involves no mystery. The pious may, however, from this circumstance be led to doubt its *divine* origin, and infidels may like it so well, that I shall be shut out of the church. But I will state it—though I must still further allege that I believe it to be based on eternal truth, and that it is calculated, if obeyed, to harmonize the world, and enable the vast family of man to live forever beneath the smiles of fraternal affection. But for the creed.

“Art. I. I BELIEVE every individual of the human family should be HONEST.

“Art. II. I BELIEVE that every one should be BENEVOLENT and KIND to all.

“Art. III. I BELIEVE that every one should use his best endeavors to procure FOOD, CLOTHING and SHELTER for himself, and labor to enable all others to procure the same to the extent of his ability.

“Art. IV. I BELIEVE, that every one should cultivate his mental powers, that he may open to himself a new source of enjoyment, and also be enabled to aid his brethren in their attempts to improve the condition of the human race, and to increase the sum of human happiness.

“Art. V. I BELIEVE, that if all mankind act on these principles they serve God all they can serve him, that he

who has this faith and conforms the nearest to what it enjoins, is the most acceptable unto God.

“This, O! ye who accuse me of infidelity, is my creed—read it, obey it, and never again tell me I am a disbeliever. Do you ask for evidences of its correctness? Find them where you can—in the Bible, in the Koran, in the volume of the universe, in our individual capacities, in our social relations or wherever else you can. The best evidence I can offer is that if any one will believe, and obey, he will want no evidence. That is to say, if any one will do the works here required, he will find so much pleasure in the performance that he will ever after wish to continue to do the same. I would quote scripture, but people say I do not believe it,—how they should know I do not, is more than I can divine. They have never derived that knowledge from myself, for I have never had it to give. But there is one passage so much in point I will quote: ‘The ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness and her paths are peace.’ But here is another still better: ‘Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way.’ There shall no evil happen to the just.’ ‘The lips of truth shall be established forever,’ and ‘The just man walketh in his integrity and his children are blessed after him.’ And again: ‘Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself,’ and ‘Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even the same unto them, for this is the law and the prophets.’ Moreover I must be permitted to quote still further. ‘But if any provide not for his own and equally for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.’ ‘Do good unto all men as you have opportunity.’ ‘But whoso hath this world’s

goods and seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' 'Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.' 'Apply thy heart unto instruction, and thine ears unto the words of knowledge.' 'To do justice and judgment is more acceptable unto the Lord than sacrifice.' 'To love God---and his neighbour as himself is more than all whole burnt offerings.' 'Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction and to keep ourself unspotted from the world.' 'And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.'

"These among many other passages of the same import, I might adduce to show my creed is scriptural, but presuming each one reads the bible for himself I leave it to him to find evidences in the book itself. I forbear to expatiate on the moral beauty of my creed, or to dwell upon what I consider will be its salutary tendency; and though not skilled in the language of cursing, I will yet say that to expect happiness without obedience to this creed is vain. I shall not tell people they shall go to hell if they do not believe it, but I will leave them, if they do not obey its injunctions, to say, whether they have not a hell in their own bosoms.

"I have now stated my creed, yet I am not so vain as to suppose all will embrace it. The orthodox will reject it because it is not mysterious, and the priests generally, because it will require them to pay as much attention to the flock as they have hitherto paid to the fleece. The heterodox will dislike it, because it will require them to treat the orthodox as kindly as they do

themselves, and what perhaps is still worse, it will not allow them to be illiberal against illiberality. And infidels of all descriptions will reject it because I have proved it by scripture. All hypocrites will condemn it because it strips off their mask and compels them to be useful in order to be respected. The selfish will anathematize it because it requires them to regard the welfare of others. And the indolent will be outrageous upon it because it requires them to be active. Hence, I conclude there will be only *few* who will hear it with gladness. As it is likely to meet opposition from every quarter, I shall flatter myself that it is true.

“If any one complains that it is defective, I will tell him if he performs all it enjoins, I will engage St. Peter shall open the gates of heaven to admit him to the mansions of the blest. But I will just whisper in the ear of my reader, I conceive this creed to be the **END** towards which all should labour, that I do not *say* it is unnecessary to believe anything else, but that nothing else is useful any farther than it tends to this end. Now my reader, if you by believing that Jonah swallowed the whale, or the story about the witch of Endor, with various others of the same character, I say, dear reader, that if believing these marvellous stories will make thee a better man, and a better man, whoever thou art, I know thou dost need to be, then I have not the least objection, even shouldst thou believe the moon is made of ‘green cheese.’ Now, ye doctors of divinity, hurl your anathemas. Let every one be **HONEST**.”

This so-called creed its author published in the “Gospel Advocate,” in June 1829. At the beginning of the following October, he published in the same journal,

"A GOSPEL CREED.

"Sometime since I published 'my creed,' and so far as I can learn, contrary to all my expectations, everybody liked it, only some thought it did not go far enough. That creed I considered necessary for every one to believe ; the one I am now about to present my readers, is a matter of opinion; on which every one may exercise his own judgment, believe or reject, and still, for aught I know, be a good man. I do not consider myself any better, merely because I believe it, nor do I believe any one the worse because he does not believe; though it is my opinion, that its tendency will be the production of good feeling and an increase of enjoyment. My reasons for writing it are to gratify a class of readers, who are anxious to know what a man believes, and also to remove a complaint made to me by a valuable brother in the ministry, viz : that I do not let what I aim at be known.

"I. The gospel, according to my view of it, recognizes the existence of ONE God and of only one, who is the prime mover of all things, whose will has established the laws of nature, whose moral character is impartial justice, based upon universal goodness and infinite mercy.

"II. This God exhibits, in the government of the world, wisdom to admire and goodness to adore ; that all which is necessary for us to know of his power and Godhead is instamped on his works and may be read in his word.

"III. A particular display of divine love and mercy is recorded in the writings of the New Testament—a display made by Jesus of Nazareth, the greatest and best reformer ever vouchsafed us by Heaven.

“IV. The object of Jesus (or of God raising him up), was to reform the world. Not to appease the anger of God, not to make an expiatory sacrifice to render God propitious, but to lead men to repentance or reformation.

“V. The means used to effect this reformation are the example, the precepts, the sufferings, the doctrine and the death of Jesus Christ. These operate in a natural way, same as a good example to follow and a correct faith, tends to purify the heart and lead to the practice of virtue. They operate not irresistibly, but persuasively, do not compel us to be good, but entice us to virtue.

“VI. That no man will be sentenced to endless misery and that no one shall be doomed to endure more misery than naturally grows out of his physical and moral condition, is a doctrine of the gospel. Yet this misery all must endure, and their only hope of relief is in the improvement of their condition, which improvement it is the duty and interest of all to effect. Deity forgives us past offences, gives us motives to reformation and exhorts us to reform, but Deity does not reform for us, we must effect this ourselves. The means are given us and if we do not use them the fault is ours.

“VII. That all will finally become holy seems highly probable. Though some consider this point positively settled, yet as one class of these consider a part will never become holy, and the other are positive that all will, I deem it a matter not positively decided. I should consider the salvation of all men as an inferential doctrine, rather than as one positively taught. I infer it from the goodness of God and the perfection towards

which all his works tend, which makes it almost certain that in their progressive operations the period will come when man will cease his folly and learn to pursue virtue as his chief good. It is also inferred from the fact that the goodness of God has made happiness possible to all, giving to all the means of procuring it, and it would be absurd to say God will ever take them away; if they always remain we shall some time or other learn to use them.

“VIII. Endless misery is no gospel doctrine. Annihilation is no part of philosophy, and to suppose a total unconsciousness of being to last through eternity is not reconcileable with the resurrection of all as taught by the new testament writers. Hence my opinion is that all mankind will by some process or other, not known to me, pass from this state of being to another analogous to it. As man is a progressive being here, as his happiness is generally in proportion to his knowledge and active virtue, so I conclude it will be hereafter. And though my heaven has not as much immediate felicity as the Universalist supposes, neither has it the misery of the orthodox hell.

“I do not like the notion of teaching men they may sin all their lives and be equally happy at death with the most virtuous. I do not say this because I think it would be any loss to the virtuous, nor because I am unwilling the wicked should fare so well, God forbid that I should ever envy any one the small pittance of happiness he may obtain. But the order of divine government seems to be on different principles, and moreover such a sentiment does not seem to place the reward of virtue in a light sufficiently clear to arrest the attention of the

thoughtless and the careless. The rewards of virtue are permanent and lasting, and to have a good moral effect ^{blat.} man ought to be taught the road to happiness lies only through the practice of moral goodness. As I am unable to perceive any thing in death which can work a moral change any farther than a change of some physical properties may change the directions of the passions I conclude our happiness in another world will be proportioned to our moral goodness, and I know no better criterion by which to determine that moral goodness on entering that world than by measuring the degree of improvement with which we left this.

“We call a vicious man miserable. It is so in this world and I conclude it will be, so long as he retains his vicious character, whether in this world or in the next. This makes the restraint of vice clear and powerful. It comes ‘home to men’s bosoms and business,’ and deters us by every consideration which can influence the mind. Heaven and hell are not considered local dwellings but mere states of the mind, both are felt in a certain degree here, and both for aught I know may be felt hereafter.

“These notions make the other world one with which we can have some sympathy. If you will tell me of another world, tell me something tangible to the mind, something which I can feel. The vague report of a song eternal sounding upon golden harps, may be very pleasing to those who love music. But an idle song may lose its charms and it is a thousand times more pleasing to my mind to contemplate the future world as a scene of active virtue, where all the kind and benevolent feelings of the heart may be exercised, where we may do good to each other and employ our leisure and

our new faculties in examining the works of our Creator. But enough for the present. This article contains matter for future speculation. My readers will pardon me for troubling them with my notions about an invisible world. I do not often trouble them thus, and they must view this weakness, if such they will call it, with an indulgent eye."

These and other views equally at variance with the generally received Universalist doctrine would, it is to be presumed, have rendered the author's further connection with the "Gospel Advocate" undesirable, if not impossible. Just at this time, however, its publisher and owner was negotiating for its sale to and consolidation with the "Evangelical Magazine" published at Utica, N. Y., by Dolphus Skinner. Brownson accompanied Ulysses F. Doubleday, the publisher of the "Gospel Advocate" to Utica and was present when the sale was closed. To help on the sale he gratuitously promised Mr. Skinner not to be concerned in publishing a similar work calculated to interfere with the interests of the "Advocate" in two years. Brownson was on his way to Boston, at the time of this sale, and when it was completed he went on to Hartford. From Hartford he wrote to Mr. Doubleday.

"HARTFORD, September 29, 1829.

"Bro. Doubleday,—After taking my leave of you and your lady at Utica, I took the stage for this place at which without much vexation or delay save riding in the night and having plenty of rain, I arrived at Hartford, which I had heard much of but had not before seen. The place is quite pleasant and doing some business. It is something of a religious place. Orthodoxy is power-

ful enough here, though I think less so than formerly. Here is a neat and very convenient house belonging to the Universalists and a very pleasant society apparently fast increasing under the well received pastoral labours of Br. Rayner.

“ You are aware that Br. Rayner was for a great number of years a preacher in the Episcopal connection, and was deservedly esteemed as a man of talents and piety. He is somewhat advanced in life, but still appears young—except in the maturity of his wisdom and his extensive knowledge of human nature. It is only about two years since he became openly a Universalist. He has done much for our cause in this state and is doing much at this time. He is highly esteemed.

“ I have preached two Sabbaths to the Universalists in this city, and was happy to find large and attentive congregations, not of merely curious hearers, but of believers in the impartial goodness of God. Universalists in the Eastern states observe the ordinances more than we do at the West. This is undoubtedly attended with some advantages. I wish men to learn to regard the substance as well as the shadow.

“ Universalism in the State of Connecticut is increasing, as fast probably as the march of intellect warrants. People here can laugh at the ‘blue laws’ as well as we at the West. I have been here too short a time to offer an opinion, but from what I have seen, liberal sentiment is not more prevalent here than it is in the Western states.

“ The Orthodox tell strange stories about the Western and Southwestern states. They would allow that at Auburn, and perhaps a little further beyond that lovely

village, the people are civilized, but they think they carry the tomahawk and scalping knife in Ohio and the great valley of the Mississippi, poor benighted region! You do not hug Calvinism so steadily as does the 'land of steady habits,' but never mind. The good folks here will soon overspread your land with tracts. Then you will hang your witches, and perhaps purge the land of all *infidelity*.

"Wherever I see the Orthodox I am convinced they fear their days are numbered and that they are assured they postpone their doom only by extraordinary exertions. They are at work, but I trust it will be the mountain in the fable, a mouse is the fruit. But really I almost begin to pity the orthodox: They are sadly troubled, beset on every side, and no means but falsehood for defence. Well do they say it is a hard job to get to heaven, surely they take a rugged path. May God teach them better. They will never teach themselves.

"I have nothing new to write. I start to-morrow for Boston, and shall hasten back to my warm-hearted friends at Auburn soon as possible.

"Yours sincerely,

"O. A. BROWNSON."

From Charlestown, he writes the following letter :

"CHARLESTOWN, October 6, 1829.

"Bro. Doubleday,—My last was written you from Hartford, I now address you from Charlestown, Mass., at which place I arrived after a fatiguing day's ride on last Wednesday evening. I can say little of the place. He who has lived in the delightful villages of the West

will not find much that is peculiarly fascinating in the older villages of the East.

“ Some pleasing recollections and peculiarly dear to the American bosom are awakened on visiting this place. The battle of Bunker’s Hill, famous in our revolutionary history, was fought here, and fought too with all that desperate valour and determined heroism, which characterize man when contending for a just cause against an overwhelming opposition. I cannot speak of battles. I hate war and have often wondered why man, so fruitful in inventions, should not long ere this have found out some means to prevent this desolating scourge. Yet I should deem myself traitor to my country could I view unmoved the spot where our undisciplined militia contended so bravely for that liberty which we now justly boast.

“ The monument to be erected on the scene of this memorable battle, is now delayed, I believe, for want of funds, though it is thought the delay will not be long. The monument is now raised to the height of forty feet, and when completed it will be, I am informed, two hundred and twenty. It will be a grand thing when finished.

“ Charlestown, I have said, is a very pleasant place, and I see no reason why it should be otherwise. The inhabitants may justly boast of their refinement, and this is no wonder, only Charles River separates them from Boston, the metropolis of New England, the focus of ‘steady habits,’ and emporium of literature, wealth, etc. There is one thing, though not peculiar to this section, seems to be carried to a greater extent here than in any other place I have visited with exception of Boston,

which by the by is no exception at all, I refer to the old barbarous practice of *flogging* children at school. How long will it be ere men will learn wisdom, and be satisfied that a blow from a hickory stick or a rattan is not the most successful method of getting learning into a child's head!

"From my own experience I am convinced that a man who is fit to teach a school will never have occasion to strike a child, and parents who think or who possess any regard for their children ought by every means in their power to discountenance this savage practice. I am not a little surprised to find the practice tolerated here where the people are far in advance of many other parts of our country. But old habits hang around us and I know not as we shall ever have courage enough to shake them off.

"There is a fine society of Universalists in this place. One day's residence among them is sufficient to refute the slanderous assertion that Universalism is a licentious doctrine. The society enjoy the pastoral labors of our friend and brother L. S. Everett. His labors are well received and duly appreciated; and I can but think if Br. E. never obtains any better heaven than he now enjoys with the large society of personal friends, he will not have much reason to complain. I know of nothing on earth that could add to the agreeableness of his situation. I do not envy him, for he deserves it. I preached to his congregation last Sabbath afternoon. I knew little of church musick before. I wish this delightful branch of Divine Worship was more carefully cultivated at the West. But we have been engaged in removing the forest and making the wilderness smile.

"In Boston I became acquainted with Rev. Hosea Ballou, whose praise is in all our churches, and not undeservedly so. He has a good society and very large congregation. I preached to his congregation last Sabbath morning and evening—in the evening to the largest collection of people to which I have ever spoken.

"Liberal sentiment spreads rapidly in this section. Orthodoxy has seen her best days here. She has fallen and will through God, soon breathe her last. No matter, she has lived long enough, and tormented us long enough to allow us some relief.

"My visit has been so far attended with high satisfaction to myself. The Universalists here in their outward appearance have very little to distinguish them from the other denominations. They observe the Lord's Supper, an institution which I have generally considered of no great practical benefit. It is doubtless attended, as I have before remarked, with some advantages. Mankind must have some outward ordinance.

"Universalism is becoming respectable in this quarter, and I trust the reign of a burning hell is nearly ended. But I have already trespassed too long upon your patience. I am, dear brother,

"Yours, etc.,

"O. A. BROWNSON."

CHAPTER IV.

FANNY WRIGHT.—WORKINGMEN'S PARTY.

RETURNING from Boston, Brownson passed Sunday, the 25th of October, at Albany, where he preached morning, afternoon, and evening to the Universalist congregation which had a small meeting-house on Herkimer Street. At Utica he went to hear a lecture by Miss Frances Wright, better known as Fanny Wright, a Scotchwoman of a little over thirty years of age, who had come to this country with La Fayette in 1824. Being opposed to slavery, whether of negroes or married couples, she purchased a plantation with some slaves at Nashoba near Memphis in Tennessee, and attempted to carry out her peculiar notions. One of the regulations which she published required that married persons entering her community should have no claims on each other in consequence of their marriage, nor any precedence over other members further than they might exercise an influence over each other's voluntary affections. In explanation of her views, she spoke of the hard condition of young females who were restrained in their conduct, till they could find convenient matches. She said, in substance, that she thought it hard to stigmatize connections formed under the influence of "kind feelings," and hoped the time would come when, if a woman were a mother, the question would not be asked whether she were a wife. The community was to be composed of black and white persons, and she expressed the expectation that they would mix and the blacks become finally incorporated with our population by that

process. Gentlemen unused to labor might live in her community by paying two hundred dollars a year for board and expenses.

The Nashoba experiment failing, Fanny Wright sent her negroes to Haiti, and devoted her talents to the enlightenment of the American people and a war on marriage, property, and religion. For these purposes she joined Robert Owen and his associates in publishing the "Free Enquirer," a weekly paper, at New York, and in lecturing in various places. The impression made on Brownson by the lecture at Utica was strengthened by a conversation with the lecturer later in the evening and still further by her visit soon afterwards to Auburn, where she delivered a course of four lectures. It was agreed between them that he should become corresponding editor at Auburn of the "Free Enquirer" and in the issue of that journal for December 7, 1829, Miss Wright announced that "Mr. O. A. Brownson has held out to her the hand of fellowship and become attached to the 'Free Enquirer,' published weekly at 359 Broome Street, New York, by Wright, Owen and Jennings, editors and proprietors, and at Auburn, State of New York, by O. A. Brownson, corresponding editor." "We conceive our readers to be familiar with the name and style of the 'Gospel Advocate,' from which publication, since it has been in the hands of its present editor, O. A. Brownson, we have made many interesting extracts. With that individual, until a few weeks since, we had no personal intercourse whatever. But we recognized him by his writings for an honest labourer in the same vineyard with ourselves; we saw that if nominally attached to a sect, he was neither in thought nor feeling sectarian,

we saw that he had dropped from the clouds upon the solid earth, and that he had renounced the chair of dogmatism to pursue enquiry in the field of nature and of human life."

Brownson had on several occasions during his connection with the "Gospel Advocate," taken Fanny Wright's part, and even published some of her articles from the "Free Enquirer;" partly, he said, "because we would have our readers understand that we are not afraid to copy from a paper which many think it would be a crime even to name without reproach, or because the article in question is really meritorious and deserves to be read by every one who does not choose to be a bigot," or "because it states in a clear and impressive manner sentiments which we have ever laboured to defend."

"We are ashamed," he wrote,* "of our countrymen that they should exhibit such enmity towards a woman who, whatever may be the correctness of her conclusions, has given no mean proofs of an enlightened mind and a truly philanthropick heart. And we regret to see the female part of the community so severe upon one who adorns their sex and seems anxious to give woman her proper rank in society, the high rank she ought to fill. Miss Wright may err, and who may not? But, abating her views on matrimony, which probably are more censured than understood, and censured by more than believe them ill-founded, we have seen nothing in her *ethicks* that should be discarded."

The step which Brownson made from Universalism to avowed infidelity naturally roused much bitter feeling

* Gospel Advocate, vol. 7, p. 253.

towards him on the part of the Universalist clergy. He assured them, however, that he did not renounce his former religious belief; that as man has no source of knowledge except his fine senses and his reason which he can only exercise on matter presented by those senses, he neither believed nor disbelieved Christianity. That Miss Wright and her associates did not advocate a community of goods, but wished to enlighten society, which, when enlightened, would adopt such regulations as their wisdom should dictate.

Understanding by love the passion described by writers of romance as necessary, fatal, irresistible, and not the rational, free, voluntary affection existing between the sexes, Brownson argued that it is criminal to take the marriage vows, to promise what is in no one's power to do. He did not, however, nor do I believe any of the persons connected with the "Free Enquirer" did, carry into their own practice the views they published on the subject of marriage. Like the community of goods this would be settled by society when enlightened. The steps towards enlightening society are described sufficiently in "The Convert."

"The great measure on which Fanny and her friends relied for ultimate success was the system of public schools which were to include the maintenance as well as the instruction of all the children by the state. These schools were intended to deprive as well as to relieve parents of all care and responsibility of their children after a year or two years of age. It was assumed that parents were in general incompetent to train up their children in the way they should go, to form them with the right sort of characters, tempers, and aims; and

therefore it was proposed that the state should take the whole charge of the children, provide proper establishments, and teachers and governors for them, till they should reach the age of majority. This would liberate the parents, and secure the principal advantages of a community of goods." *

"But the more immediate work was to get our system of schools adopted. To this end it was proposed to organize the whole Union secretly, very much on the plan of the Carbonari of Europe, of whom at that time I knew nothing. The members of this secret society were to avail themselves of all the means in their power, each in his own locality, to form public opinion in favor of education by the state at the public expense, and to get such men elected to the legislatures as would be likely to favor our purposes. How far the secret organization extended, I do not know; but I do know that a considerable portion of the State of New York was organized, for I was myself one of the agents for organizing it. I, however, became tired of the work, and abandoned it after a few months. Whether the organization still exists, or whether it has ever exerted any influence or not, is more than I am able to say, or have taken the pains to ascertain."† Perhaps its influence might be traced in the elimination of religion from the public schools; perhaps also the doctrine against marriage has helped to bring the country to the growing practice of divorce and disregard for the marriage contract.

Their next step, and in connection with this was the formation of what was known as the Workingmen's Party.

* Brownson's Works, vol. v, p. 59.

† Ib. p. 61.

The workingmen's party, as a political party, originated in Philadelphia in 1827, and extended to New York in 1829. In April 1829, a meeting of mechanics and others was called in the City of New York, in consequence of some letters published by Matthew Carey, concerning the condition of sempstresses in our principal cities. This meeting appointed a committee of fifty to inquire into the moral, intellectual, and physical condition of the industrial classes, with power to call another meeting and to make their report.

At one of the meetings called by the committee, one Skidmore presented a string of resolutions which were read once and adopted without their being understood by half of even that portion. Some individuals tried to get them reconsidered, but their voices were drowned. These resolutions smelt of agrarianism, and they were then and for years after held up by the public as the creed of the party. But very wrongly. Soon after their publication, a great meeting of the workingmen was called in New York, and new resolutions were adopted, expressly disclaiming all agrarian doctrines. This produced a division in the ranks of the workingmen. Skidmore and the old committee of fifty claimed to be the only true workingmen. Skidmore published a paper in which he contended that all estates, when the owner died, should revert to the state, and be portioned out to young men and women, on entering life, in equal quantities. His party was called agrarian; it was between three and four hundred strong; but it died in the winter of 1830-1, and has not been heard of since. This Skidmore was active in getting up the workingmen's party in the City of New York, and he was undoubtedly an

agrarian ; but his views were soon disclaimed by the workingmen; he was left in a miserable minority, without a single paper to respond to his sentiments but his own, which lived but a few weeks; he was pelted most unmercifully by almost every workingmen's editor, among whom was Brownson; his party soon dwindled away and died, and he with it. This is all the agrarianism which could be charged upon the workingmen.

The real principle of the workingmen related to labor. The workingmen wished to elevate labor, to make it respectable, and to have the useful arts as well rewarded as any other. They knew that manual labor was held as servile, and they thought it was not so well rewarded as it should have been, because while the lawyer, the merchant, or the master mechanic grew rich, the simple laborer remained poor. These two things they made war upon. Their great error was confounding social with political science. The evils of which they complained were the result of the social, not of the political, principles advocated or acted upon. Their remedy, then, was not a change of laws, but of the prevailing mode of thinking and feeling.

No inclination for an equal division of property was indicated by the movements of the workingmen. There was not a paper devoted to the cause of the workingmen, with the exception just alluded to, which did not in the most unequivocal manner repudiate the idea of an equal division, or any division of property, by violent means, or any means, except those recognized by political economy.

Their movement created considerable excitement at the time, and was speedily followed by similar move-

ments in various sections of the Union. There was even a moment, when this party seemed not unlikely to become a dominant party in the country. It was sustained by several leading journals of the National Republican party, as well as by several of its own, conducted with great spirit and ability, and somewhat extensively circulated. But as an organized party, it proved to be short-lived, and soon became almost entirely merged in one or both of the great political parties which then divided the country.

The workingmen's party owed its origin to the new questions, of graver import, which had come up, or were struggling to come up, for practical solution. The Federal and Republican parties of 1798 had well-nigh lost their hold on the popular mind; they were purely political parties, dividing on questions which almost entirely related to the organization of the state, and the form to be given to the government. Hamilton's party, distrusting the people, sought mainly to make the government permanent, stable, and strong. Jefferson's leaning the other way, trusted the people, and wanted a pure democracy.

In 1829, the established creed of the country was democracy, and it was no easy matter to say which party was the more democratic. But it began to be doubted whether political democracy was an improvement on an aristocratic or a monarchical form of government, if it went no further than universal suffrage and eligibility, and equality before the state. All possible good is not summed up in suffrage and eligibility, nor is the popular mind satisfied with equality before the state, without equality before society. Having realized equality in

their political condition, their next effort was for social equality. The advocates of this social democracy called themselves the Workingmen's party.

The name was ill-chosen. In one sense all Americans were workingmen. In the stricter meaning, it included all who had no means of subsistence but their simple labor, in which sense it excluded a large number of the most earnest and active supporters of social democracy and while including a larger number of such as would never make any exertion for their own social elevation. Another mistake was in assuming the name of a particular class of society as the party name, thereby seeming to indicate that the party's object was to protect a special interest. Moreover, the other parties, especially the Democratic party, by supporting some of the friends of the workingmen, professing great regard for them, and making them fair promises, created the impression that a workingmen's party was not needed, and as a matter of course, prevented the exertions without which the party could not be sustained.

Robert Dale Owen and his associates hoped by linking their cause with the ultra-democratic sentiment of the country, which from the beginning of our government was somewhat antichristian, to raise the workingmen's party to power, and be able to use it for securing the adoption of their educational system.

"Into this party," Brownson says, "I entered with enthusiasm. I established in western New York a journal in its support, and cooperated with 'The Daily Sentinel,' conducted by my friends in the city. But I soon tired of the party, and gave my influence and that of my journal, in the Autumn of 1830, to the Jackson candidate, E. T. Throop.

against Frank Granger, the candidate of the anti-masons, for governor. This defection ruined my journal as a party journal, and a few days after the election I disposed of it to my partner, and ceased to be its editor. The truth is, I never was and never could be a party man, or work in the traces of a party. I abandoned, indeed, the workingmen's party, but not the workingmen's cause, and to that cause I have been faithful according to my light and ability."*

The support which Brownson gave to the workingmen's party was rather by moral and social, than by political views, and the end he proposed was moral and social amelioration and equality rather than political. Indeed, he at no time valued political equality save as a means to the moral and social improvement of mankind. All his life long Brownson sympathised with the laboring class, believing that their rights required greater protection than before the introduction of the system of large industries carried on by means of vast outlays of capital, or credit, reducing operatives to the condition of virtual slavery. He had not long supported the workingmen's party before he became satisfied that this protection was not to be secured by arraying labor against capital by a political organization, but by inducing all classes to co-operate in efforts to procure the reform and improvement of the workingmen's condition. In this direction he saw that he could not proceed a single step without religion, as the moving power and the reconciler of discordant interests. When he renounced Universalism, he claimed that he did not renounce the Christian religion and become a disbeliever, but only an unbeliever.

* Brownson's Works, vol. v, p. 52.

At the same time, feeling himself freed from all authority of sectarian creeds, his early religious principles and affections returned with greater force and he embraced what he called a religion, the religion of Humanity. For love of God, or charity, he substituted love of man, or philanthropy. Christ he looked upon as the model man and great reformer, and all who labored to introduce a new order of things and promote the happiness of man, as Christians.

In abandoning the workingmen's party, he at the same time severed his connection with "The Free Enquirer," with which he was not in perfect sympathy, either in regard to education or marriage. He was opposed to the breaking up of the family and turning the children over to the state to be brought up by it, and to be instructed in nothing that is not material and sensible. The end he sought to attain was the moral as well as the social improvement of the race, and the means he proposed were wholly moral,—love, disinterestedness, self-sacrifice.

CHAPTER V.

THE PHILANTHROPIST.

AFTER disposing of his interest in the workingmen's journal and severing all political connection with their party, Brownson, on the first Sunday of February, 1831, began preaching in Ithaca as an independent minister, not connected with any sect or denomination. The Universalist ministers no longer reckoned him one of their body, and he could hardly himself have told whether he was a Universalist in his belief or not ; for there was no finding out what Universalism was. If one attacked the errors of Chauncey, he was told Universalists did not believe them ; if he found fault with the crooked hypothesis of Rely and Huntington, he was told that was not Universalism ; if he criticised the sleepy, skeptical views of Balfour, he was informed that Universalists did not believe with him ; if he condemned the puerile philosophy of Whittemore in the "Trumpet," and the sarcastic, revolting, licentious writings of Ballou, he was assured that he was misrepresenting Universalism. He concluded, upon examination, that the Unitarians had all that was really good in Universalism, "without its revolting and mischievous errors." *

In his first sermon at Ithaca, in February, 1831, he said: "I belong to no party, I disclaim all sectarian names. You have called me a Universalist, I disown the name, though I may not oppose what an enlightened Universalist would wish to effect. I do not wish to be

* See *The Philanthropist*, vol. ii, p. 255.

called a Universalist. Should I assume the name of any party, it should be Unitarian, as that denomination approximates nearer, in my estimation, to the spirit of Christianity than any other. Unitarian discourses are mostly practical; their lessons inculcate charity, a refined moral feeling, and universal benevolence. They teach us God is our Father, that all men are brethren, and that we should cultivate mutual good will, and imbibe a liberal and manly feeling towards all men. Unitarian preaching, in general, I approve; but I discover no necessity of assuming any name that can become the rallying point of a sect. You will, therefore, forbear to associate my name with any party, either orthodox or heterodox. I am an independent preacher, accountable to my God, to truth, to my country, to the people of my charge, but to no other tribunal.

“In this respect, I differ from most other preachers. But in this I discover no disadvantage. Truth is the property of no one sect, righteousness is the exclusive boast of no one denomination. All have some truth, all have some errors. To join any one, you must support its falsehoods as well as its truths, or they will cast you out of the synagogue. You must study to conceal the faults of your party, and often be compelled to suffer reproach from the misconduct of your associates.

“If you have a party to which you attach yourselves, you will, most likely, have certain sentiments which you will feel bound to support, and which, in most cases, your associates will induce you to maintain through fear of losing your reputation, if not your means of support. The party may at first be good; it may be organized for the noblest purposes; the first adherents may be men of

enlarged and liberal minds, of benevolent hearts; they may have an eye single to the support of the dearest interests of mankind; but it can hardly happen that none of more selfish purposes will at length assume the lead, or that, in the progress of events, the majority may not become more intent on building themselves up as a mere party than on discovering and promulgating truth.

“No man, who has attended to the subject, can doubt that the first Christian churches were founded by the best feelings of the human heart, and for the noblest purposes of philanthropy. But how soon were they perverted to other ends, made subservient to the aggrandizement of a few, and the consequent depression of the many! Each sect in its origin has aimed well, and has had some really good things; but each in its progress, deeming itself bound by the perfection it boasted in its commencement, binding its adherents back to the starting point, prohibiting them on pain of excommunication, and often of death, from any innovation or departure from what its projector enjoined, has destroyed its utility and involved a long catalogue of evils, too numerous to be named, and too painful to be dwelt upon.

“At present, soon as one thinks of being religious, soon as he feels serious and desires to understand religion and enjoy its consolations, he immediately unites with some sect. This, too often, proves an end to his progress. The church has its creed, its rules, and its usages, which it not unfrequently holds dearer than truth. These the young convert must embrace and zealously support, not only while he has the belief and feelings he has on uniting, but through all after life, let his future convictions be what they may.

"Now, who is there that does not perceive the ill consequences of these misplaced and mistimed demands? Who so foolish as to pretend that a child twelve or fourteen years old has mastered the whole subject, and learned so much that nothing remains to be learned? The fact is, the child or the youth usually unites with the church, and declares what he will always believe, soon as he commences learning, while the whole field of religious science is before him, as yet untraversed. For him at this moment to assume to know all that can be known, or to know so much as to know he shall never see cause to change his opinion, is most egregious folly, and those who encourage him to do this, are doing him and the world incalculable injury. The opinions he now adopts he may soon discover to be erroneous; those he now condemns farther and closer investigation may discover to be true. Ought he not to be free to renounce the one set and to embrace the other without injury to his character? Can he do this, without disgrace, if he be a member of any of our churches? The laws of our churches are like those of the Medes and Persians; they change not, aye, they allow no change. If he who has unfortunately acknowledged their sway presume to reason beyond the limits they prescribe he is called a heretic, his standing in the church is lost, and he is turned out into the world with the damning brand of heresy on his forehead, an object of scorn to all who deem it a virtue never to doubt.

"I do not speak at random, my friends, I speak from experience. I was a Universalist,—a Universalist preacher. I was so unfortunate, in the prosecution of my studies, as to have doubts; I withdrew myself from the

denomination to which I belonged, and ceased to preach. What was the consequence? Approbation for my honesty? No, they excommunicated me, and published me from one end of the country to the other as a rejecter of christianity, as an unprincipled villain. This is the principle by which all sects are governed. What encouragement has one to enquire after truth, or to aspire to any growth in knowledge, after he has united with a sect? Will it not be his wisest course to sit down with the remark, 'my church is right, at least I will not enquire, lest haply I find it in the wrong?'

"The fact is, nearly all churches, as now organized, are unfriendly to the full development of religious or mental excellence. They are like the Philistines' chains which bound Samson when shorn of his strength, and those who come within their enclosures can do little else than grind in their prison houses. I know of no real advantage they offer to the world. The only bond of union I approve is that which spontaneously springs from similar sentiments, similar feelings, and the pursuit of similar objects. The sympathy of a like faith, of common objects, and common feelings, will bind us sufficiently close to each other.

"To preach righteousness, then, I do not conceive it necessary to urge you to join a church. I wish you to observe all the good there is in any or all of our churches, to ascertain all they have of truth, and make it your own; but, if you will be wise, you will beware how you receive their fetters, and place yourselves in a situation by which you must father their faults as well as their virtues."

Some sermons of Dr. Channing, one of which he published in "The Philanthropist," confirmed him in his opinion of Unitarians. The distinction which he understood at this time to exist between Unitarians and deists consisted in the former believing, and the latter denying the external revelation of God, or the Bible, so far as its *real* teachings are fairly made out, and an internal, or God speaking by his spirit to the human soul not merely in reason and conscience, but illuminating conscience and giving it its power; the pervading presence and superintending providence of God in the government of the material universe by the agency of the physical laws of gravitation, attraction, electricity, and the like, and of the spiritual world by agencies consistent with man's free-will; the efficacy of prayer; resurrection from the dead, and a future state of righteous retribution. It must be said, however, that Brownson, in maintaining the efficacy of prayer, did not, at this time, believe that God could be moved by it, but he looked upon it as the appointed medium for the reception of spiritual good, for preserving the soul's health, and increasing its power. It does not alter the plans of Jehovah, he said, "but it leads us to contemplate the perfections of God, to dwell on his providence and his relations to us, and has a tendency to beget in us a growing likeness to that excellence to which we address ourselves. It draws not God to us, but us to him, and thus enables us, to gather purity and strength by communion with our heavenly Father." *

The belief in a future state of existence he deemed a universal sentiment of human nature, which he would not, if he could, affirm to be the result of imagination or

* Ibid. p. 242.

a mere dream. "We would not disbelieve. Without the hope of another, this were indeed a wretched world. We would believe, even if in error; for if we err, we secure the bliss of believing, and can never feel the pang of disappointment.

"There is something curdling to our blood in the thought we are to be no more. There is something too painful to be described, almost to be endured, to stand by the newly made grave, and see let down into the cold earth, the one we have loved, whose soul was commingled with our own, and to feel that it is the final end,—to feel that there lies the form we have often clasped in transport; there are closed the eyes which shone with intellect; there are mute the lips that discoursed so often music to our ears; there is still the heart that beat to warmest and kindest feeling. All, as the clods rattle on the coffin, vanish, and we stand lone and withered beings. It is as if the life spring were broken. A sombre hue comes over the whole of nature. The soul is dark. Not a ray beams out to pierce the dismal cloud that hangs over it. I have thus stood by the grave of my friend; I have thus looked upon his dissolution as the end of all that I loved. It is enough, I would not stand there again. Wisdom may assert we die to live no more. But the soul shrinks from the thought of annihilation, and it would seem that shrinking back, that horror at non-entity, indicates that death cannot be the end of our being. Perhaps it is not unreasonable to infer a future state from the capacity of the soul itself. Few who have contemplated the soul, its mighty powers, its sublimity of feeling, its moral grandeur, its continual aspirations after something it has not, its wish to stretch beyond the narrow circumference

of the earth, beyond the stars, beyond the farthest limits of space, to rise and hold communion with the Mysterious Power it feels but sees not; few have taken this view of the human soul, and have not deemed it destined to survive the frail tenement of clay in which it is lodged. Who can believe a being of such varied and extensive powers, so high, so noble, and often so godlike in its aspirations and achievements, is born but for an hour? No, it cannot be." *

It was while attempting as a Universalist to combat the doctrine of future reward and retribution, and to maintain the final salvation of all mankind, that he became convinced of the error of his position, and both the fallacy of his arguments, and the distortion of the texts of scripture which he and his coreligionists twisted from their plain and natural meaning. His doubts of God's existence were at the same time dispelled. He never was an atheist, in the sense that he denied God; but was so near to atheism, that if he refused to say, "There is no God," he did say, "I do not believe a God." The cause of his unbelief and the principle which brought him back to belief in the existence of God he published in "The Philanthropist" for February 14, 1832. "In this age of reckless enquiry, of fearful agitation and severe trial, it is not only necessary that we should contend for the truth, but that we should contend for it on just grounds, and by sound arguments. There is nothing more fundamentally necessary to the healthy and vigorous state of the moral constitution, than the firm unwavering belief in one God, the Moral Governor and Spiritual Father of the universe; yet this belief may be lost, or not produced,

* Ibid. p. 19.

if we attempt to prove there is a God, by arguments which are not sound, or by a method of reasoning which is essentially defective.

"I can read Clark, Tillotson, Locke, Paley, and other giant spirits of other days, and still doubt the being of a God. To me they all seem to have failed to meet the difficulties in the case, and to have taken for granted the very points they should have proved. All I ever read on this subject but increased my doubts, and plunged me deeper and deeper in scepticism.

"My own experience must count for something to myself. Theology has been to me something more than mere speculation. It engrossed my infant mind. It is connected with all I remember of my early visions, and entwined with all the endearing associations of childhood and youth. When reason first awoke, while thought was unfledged, it was to me a subject of deep and cherished feeling. In the early dawn of youth, there was nothing I so much dreaded as that which should divert my thoughts from the Deity, and interrupt my silent but blissful intercourse of soul with the Father of our spirits. I loved the night, for it seemed to shadow him forth and to give him a local habitation. I frequented the deep solitude of the forest, I clomb the cragged mountain, stood upon its huge cliffs; I gazed with rapture on nature in her wildest and most fitful moods; for in the lone, wild, grand, sublime scenery around me, I seemed to trace his work, and to feel his spirit reigning, in silent, but not unacknowledged majesty. I was never alone. I felt the Deity was with me. I loved his presence. A consciousness of it created my joy and waked my holier and better feelings. Those were hallowed days! Their

memory is deep graven on my heart. As I view them mellowed by time and distance, it is with emotion I say to myself, 'They are gone!'

"Such was the state of my young affections; such the religious feelings of my childhood and youth. They were not learned from books; they were not produced by human teachers. They were the simple feelings of nature, the child led by instinct to seek the embrace of its parent. But soon as I entered the school of theology, and began to take my religion from books, I began to doubt. The more I read the stronger grew my scepticism. Inclination, interest, early habit, and even a lively sensibility to devotion, struggled against it in vain. I stood upon the precipice. I looked down the abyss of atheism, ready to take the awful plunge.

"I look back with startling horror, upon that eclipse of the soul, that mid-night of reason, from which I am but just recovered. Still, my doubts were first awakened by reading Paley's Natural Theology.

"The appeal to the light, order, harmony, and mechanism of nature, may confirm him who already believes in an Almighty Architect, but will never convert the Atheist. He will ask you to prove what you call design is the work of a designer. He will not ask you to prove the world did not come by chance; he would rather you should show the things to which you refer him were produced, and before you accuse him of ascribing the world to chance, he would wish you to convince him it ever came at all. Whatever is *made*, necessarily implies a maker, but the difficulty is to obtain proof the world ever was made. I will not pursue this argument, lest I weaken the faith of some who have no different

evidence, from that usually presented, on which to depend.

"There is in my opinion, need that we meet the Atheist on different ground. At some future day, I hope to give in full the considerations which produced my own conversion from scepticism to an unwavering and joyful belief in one God—my Father. I am anxious to do this because my conversion was as unexpected to myself as it was to my friends ; because it was so sudden that there were few to believe it genuine. For the present, I can only add, the Atheist who looks only at external nature for proofs of a God will probably look in vain ; but, if he will turn his mind inward and converse with his own spiritual nature, he will hear the still, small, but clear and convincing voice of God to the inner man. I have thus a witness within, and having this witness, I can find its testimony corroborated by the whole of external nature. I forgot the spirit, looked only at the flesh, and this witness was unheeded. It was therefore I doubted. I turned my thoughts inward ; I heard the voice of God, I believed—felt myself again locked in the embrace of my Father." *

Whilst preaching at Ithaca, Brownson edited and published a weekly journal called "The Philanthropist." The circulation of the paper was satisfactory enough ; but the neglect of subscribers to pay their dues compelled its suspension in the middle of the second volume, in June 1832. "We dare not," says the editor, "contract a debt with our printer that we cannot pay ; it would be wronging him." †

* The Philanthropist, vol. ii, p. 113 et seq. † Ib. p. 256.

Among the contributors to the pages of "The Philanthropist" was Isaac B. Peirce, the Unitarian minister at Trenton Falls, a man of great simplicity, earnest and affectionate disposition, and a lover of solitude and study. For years after, he was a constant correspondent of Brownson's and an occasional visitor. In his letters he describes everything that interests him, the books he reads, the sermons he preaches,—at least the texts,—his salary, the weather, and the state of the health of his family. Dr. Gannett, Mr. Ripley, and other Unitarian ministers from Boston were often his guests in summer time, and preached in his stead. His salary was, as he wrote in January 1836, subscribed for, for that year, at \$100 in Trenton, \$72 in Holland Patent, and \$40 in Newport, in all \$212, with "hay \$10 and \$12 per ton, and what is worse, there is very little, if any, for sale, corn about a dollar a bushel, and butter, tho' thousands and ten times thousands of pounds are made around us, has been this Fall 30 cents a pound; this country will be ruined by the dairy folks; this whole region to the St. Lawrence will yet become a dairy district." "I will now give you some account of our cold weather:—16th of December, at 8 o'clock a. m., the mercury on the north side of my house was down to 25° below zero; at 6 o'clock p. m., 17° below zero; at 9 p. m., 22° below zero; and on the 17th, at sunrise the mercury was down in the thermometer to 34° below zero!—and clear, pleasant and calm. My neighbour, Mr. Moore of the Trenton House, told me that he was up between one and two o'clock that night, and his thermometer stood at 37° below zero."

When in the summer of 1831, Brownson informed him of his intended visit to Boston, Mr. Peirce wrote:

“TRENTON, July 23rd, 1831.

“REV. O. A. BROWNSON.

“My Dear Sir,—Yesterday I received yours of the 16th. I am greatly pleased to learn that you intend to come and see me. I hope nothing will hinder your fulfilling your intention, and that you will calculate to preach for me. If I can be of any use in giving you letters to Professor Ware, or Dr. Ware, or Mr. Gannett, or Dr. Channing, I shall be happy to do it; and I doubt not, your visit to Boston will be most agreeable to you. Let no ordinary hindrance prevent you being here on a Sabbath, as I intend to give notice to some liberal friends in the neighbouring towns.

* * * * *

“Permit me to ask you whether you possess among your books the Manual of the French Theophilanthropists? If you turn to Evans’ sketches, etc., you will see he speaks of it as being translated, by Dr. John Walker, into English. Mr. Belsham speaks of it in his letters to Mr. Wilberforce, which I have, in high terms. Now, if you have this book, or can obtain it, I request you to take it on with you, and loan it to me, at least until yr return.

Having proposed to visit Mr. Brownson in Walpole the first week in April 1833, he writes on the 26th of March: “I am extremely loath to fail in reaching you by the 3rd of April, but as one of my neighbors returned home last Sunday from Albany, I learn that the roads never were worse, and that he walked in preference to

the peril of riding in the stage and did actually keep ahead of it the whole distance to the Little Falls. The stage was *two days* getting from Schenectady to Utica, 62 miles, and kept on night and day. Knowing my own infirmity of constitution, I am seriously apprehensive that I shall get sick if I start on the journey at such a difficult time to travel, and in that condition I should be too much of a burden for your family." So he proposes postponing his start till the 7th, or the middle of April. "Permit me to say, that I greatly and most truly thank you, my friend, for the compensation you speak of, and which will enable me to visit you, which I have so much at heart, and not draw from the means of my family's support; and as is natural, I should like to combine the pleasure of seeing the country with the pleasure of my visit to you." And further on: "Our own road to Utica, bad as it always is in Spring and Fall, never reached its maximum till now; this is the judgment of Col. Hicks who has known it ever since it was made; and my neighbor, Mr. Moore, who went out to Utica last week when it was better than now, told me that he would not again go out and return with his team for \$50. Our stage to the Little Falls does not get down till night." To read, one after the other, the whole series of Mr. Peirce's letters is as interesting as almost any book, to the student of character and the admirer of honest candour, and his minute details of his life and its little troubles were greatly appreciated by his friend and correspondent.

CHAPTER VI.

FOURTH OF JULY ADDRESS.—DISCOURSE PREPARED FOR GUY C. CLARK'S EXECUTION.—CONVERSATION WITH AN EVANGELICAL.

AT the invitation of the citizens of Ovid, Brownson delivered in that village an oration on July 4th, 1831, in which he expresses the thoughts which at this time were uppermost in his mind in a manner so characteristic of him that I am tempted to insert here considerable extracts.

"It is with no ordinary feelings," he says in the course of his oration, "that Americans should meet to commemorate the 4th of July, 1776. That was a day of deep import,—a day that opened a new era in men's thoughts, and in men's acts. It dawned with good to man. Generations shall be unfolding the events it involved; and it shall accumulate new loveliness and glory through all coming time. With it commenced our national existence; with it is entwined the memory of the great, the good, the sage and the heroic. With it are associated in our minds the master spirits of our people; and in its sacredness is enshrined the memory of departed worth,—such as the world has seldom seen, or will see again. With it are connected all our ideas of national suffering—national heroism—national triumphs; and fastened on it are all the patriotic lessons of our fathers who have gone. Dear must it be to every American heart! Who would not consecrate it to the memory of noble daring, of high resolve, of deeds that

ennobled man, of individuals, whose moral and mental greatness, whose firmness, stern integrity and undying love of country have spread a halo of glory around the human race? Let it remain, then, through all time as the nation's jubilee; as the day on which to meet and rekindle our love of liberty—to fan yet brighter the patriot's fire, and extend still farther the philanthropist's hopes.

“We meet in peace. The roar of artillery and the martial reveille are but the notes of our rejoicing that peace dwells in our borders. If the distant sounds of war, from the old world, from the people struggling with their masters, and conspiring to break the chains of their despotism, strike on our ears, we can look around on smiling landscapes; our wives and children are secure; no ruthless invader tramples on the hopes of the husbandman, carrying terror before him, and leaving famine, pestilence and death in his rear. Our flocks and herds graze unmolested; the grain waves in homage to him who cultivates the earth; and we can ‘sit down under our own vine and fig tree, with none to molest or make us afraid.’

“The condition of our country is truly flattering to patriotic pride; and its unrivalled prosperity in every part affords an interesting comment on our free institutions. Cold must be the heart, and unworthy the genial sun of freedom, that does not swell with noble emotions on recalling our past history—dwelling on the much we have done, the much we are doing, and the high hopes we have excited for the future. Far and wide we have felled the eternal forests; beautiful and lovely are the cities and villages we have erected where a few years since

curled the smoke of the wigwam or where prowled the beast of prey. We have made the wilderness smile by our industry ; and we have peopled it with millions of free and intelligent beings.

“ But I stand not here to repeat the story of your achievements, nor to inflate your vanity by rounded periods, and sounding epithets on your present greatness. I love my country, I glory in having been born an American. I would not seem insensible to the much we have gained, the much we possess when compared to the king and priest-ridden countries of the old world ; but I would also remember our work is only commenced,—nobly commenced, indeed, yet still only in its infancy.”

After discussing liberty in the sense of freedom from alien or hereditary rule, he proceeds :

“ Liberty has yet a wider sense,—one vastly more important than mere national independence, or the right to choose our own government and rulers. With these man is but half free. There is a more subtle and a more powerful tyrant that lurks within and enslaves the soul. Custom, habit, influence of wealth, of some adventitious circumstance, may make or keep the many vassals to the few. There is the dark bondage of the mind that may remain. Ignorance, bigotry, superstition, may enter the soul and destroy its native power ; the hidden fire of intellect may be smothered for want of courage to fan it to a flame. Man may become afraid of man ; may lock up his thoughts in his bosom and bow to popular prejudice ; or worse, the tender shoot may be trampled as it first discloses its concealed beauty ; the infant mind may be crippled ; its native energy destroyed ere it is developed ; and the being bearing human form

may grow up ignorant, unthinking, unreasoning ; with no ideas but those he may chance to borrow—poor, feeble ; worthless, brutalized, dark and desperate, prepared for 'treasons, villanies and spoils.'

"There are no chains like those which fetter the mind, no despotism like that of vice. We may boast of our liberty ; we may boast of our zeal, the bravery, the self-sacrifice, the hardy endurance of toil, of danger, of want, the stern patriotism and untiring perseverance, and unrivalled victories of the heroes of our revolution ; we may boast of our extended territory, our rapid improvements, our unparalleled industry and enterprise, our universal commerce, our increasing wealth and national greatness ; but our boasts are mere wind, if there be not *freedom to the mind*. Liberty, the very soul of liberty, must be enshrined in every human breast. Every thought must be free ; every aspiration must be high, holy, unrestrained ; or all our pretensions are idle breath, we have no bulwark for freedom, no safeguards for the rich legacy left us by those who fought our battles and gave us national existence.

"That our liberty is written on paper, that our rights are recorded in constitutions can avail little, if they be not written on the heart. They must sink deep into the soul ; the love of liberty must mingle with every breath,—must flash from every eye,—glow on every cheek, impart its highborn air to every one's manner, to his speech, his walk, to his whole deportment, or valueless are all the proud and spirit-stirring associations of this auspicious day.

"Fellow-citizens, there is no true liberty where there is not a high-toned virtue. He only is free who feels

no restraint but the will of God,—who yields only to his devotion to truth and to moral rectitude. It is only this moral and mental liberty which should be the patriot's and the philanthropist's aim. Give but these to the degraded peasantry of Europe, and thrones fall, dynasties are forgotten, the rights of man are recognized and secured. 'Tis the slavery of the mind which paves the way to that of the body, and the slavery of individuals which induces that of nations. The timid slave of ignorance, of base passion, of low wants, and grovelling vice, may be a vile minion of power, and make his body a footstool for the aspiring demagogue to clamber to a throne; but it belongs not to such as he to detect, seize and secure the rights of man.

“Friends, bear with me. I am most anxious to impress this all important truth, *that our only hope for the full development and perpetuity of our free institutions is in the moral soundness of the people.* Our rulers are men from our midst; they do and will partake of the prevailing passions of the times. They will be the creatures of the reigning tone—the vice or the virtue, of the people from whom they are selected. In a general corruption of morals and manners, they escape not uncontaminated. They drink at the popular fountain, and will always be infected by the diseases it generates. To the most stupid and least observant, then, it must be evident that in a government like ours, virtue, high, stern, unbending virtue must be maintained by all our citizens, or else we have not the security desired and needed.

“We complain of our public officers, of their want of public spirit, stern integrity, and generous disregard of self, but our complaints are misplaced. Our politicians

and public men exhibit only the prevailing spirit of the times; and as it would be hard to find one who would not exhibit the same disregard of the public, the same all-absorbing selfishness, it ill becomes us to complain. True, party spirit rages to an alarming extent, evincing very clearly a diseased state of the public mind: true, all seem scrambling for place to fatten on its rewards; but are only our rulers and prominent politicians to blame? This were a partial view. The demon who sports with our security and threatens our free institutions, possesses not merely a few individuals; he is the reigning spirit of the times; and you all feel his influence, and in a greater or less degree, yield to his unholy dominion.

“I know on this day it is customary to extol the deeds of the fathers of our country, to speak in terms of the most exaggerated praise of the patriots, sages and heroes of our revolution. No man venerates that band of worthies more than I, No one feels more deeply the dignity they conferred on human nature. Their names are embalmed in my heart, and silent be my voice and dead my pulse when I feel no emotion at the mention of a Washington, a Franklin, a Jefferson and their noble compeers. But we are their descendants; are their countrymen; and unworthy were we of their fame if we gave them only cold praise with our lips, while we treasured not up their virtues in our hearts, nor exemplified or imitated them in our lives. The best praise, the best monument to their departed worth, is the living practice of their virtues. I know also it is customary, on this day, to boast of our virtue and intelligence. But I cannot flatter. I cannot boast of that we do not possess. I would not wound vanity, nor cramp the ardor of hope;

but I were betraying the confidence which called me here, to refuse to probe the heart where national good requires.

“ My friends, we are not that enlightened and virtuous people we pretend ; compared with other nations we may be eminently so , but compared with what we might, and should be, we are not. It were poor praise to our noble institutions, a poor compliment to the blessings of liberty, for us to feel contented with being as good as nations which groan beneath the lash of tyranny. We have advantages which no other nation can imagine, and are we not to exhibit corresponding excellences of character ? Friends, I fear we have too often neglected this thought. We seem daily departing from first principles ; and, instead of aiming at a high, commanding, simple and unaffected republican character, we are enraptured with foreign jewgaws ; every day aping the spirit, the manners and the usages of monarchical governments. There is an all-absorbing selfishness which prevails, avarice has become our besetting sin, and its deep brand is being stamped on every heart. It is in this prevailing spirit of the people that the danger lurks ; it is in this that originate the vices that we charge upon our public men. The moral feeling is bad ; and unless we correct it, aye, and correct it in our own hearts, our republic falls, and must one day, like Athens or Rome, sigh under the whip of the despot.

“ Speak I harshly ? Charge I my countrymen wrongfully ? Would to God I did, and that the evils I see were only the dreams of my own disordered imagination. But look at the increasing fondness for show and parade ; look at the tide of luxury pouring in ; look at

the 'high life below stairs' which glares upon us from every miserable hut; look at the combustible state of the public mind, the power of faction, the jealousies and maddened zeal of rival parties and rival sects, which have become proverbial, and tell me if what I say is not most lamentably true? There is danger, a lurking evil that menaces destruction, but gladly would I believe it were only in my own fancy that I see it."

Then, after dwelling briefly on the evils of sectarianism and of too much deference to public opinion, the speaker continues:

"But the errors to which I have alluded, are not those of the government; they are those of the people. We are prone to charge too much upon government, as well as to exact too much from its exertions. Government can cure but few of the evils of any community. Its province is mostly negative, to check the encroachments of individual upon individual, and to secure to each the reward of his own industry. The great business of life asks no aid of government. The people, as individuals and social beings, must conduct it as self-interest prompts, and wisdom or ignorance, vice or virtue, directs. There can be no bad government where the people, as individuals, are wise, virtuous and independent. There can be no good government where the people are the slaves of ignorance and vice, the victims of crime, or the votaries of luxury and licentiousness. As individuals, as citizens, patriots, it should then be our grand study to acquire just principles, and to form characters noted for honesty, truth, honour and humanity. Each will then possess in his own person an item of that moral and mental freedom that shall go to make up the whole sum

of national liberty and independence. Let each aim to discharge promptly and cheerfully the several private and social duties, let all aim at pure hearts, benevolent dispositions and unspotted lives, and there will then be an elevated national character; there will be a free and vigorous population; all the blessings of liberty and righteousness will be secured and transmitted unimpaired to the latest posterity. Turn, I beseech you, turn your attention to your own principles and conduct, to the forming of free, high, commanding characters as individuals, if you love your country and desire to see it free, great, flourishing, happy. Hope its security and prosperity from individual excellence of character, rather than from legislative enactments, or the resolutions of public meetings. Here, on this principle, you may commence your 'internal improvements'* in earnest, and fear from the appropriation and exertions you may make no danger to the constitution of your country.

"But as true as a high, uncompromising moral virtue is the only sure pledge for national independence and the perpetuity of our free institutions, so true is it that this virtue can never exist without a high mental cultivation. There is no permanence, no worth, no loveliness in the inspirations of ignorance. There is no hope, no promise of good from the morality of a people over whom hangs an intellectual night, spreading its leaden influence over all the faculties, and benumbing all the energies of the human being. It will only be the bursts of base passion, the destructive flashes of barbarous zeal, on the dark workings of envy and revenge. Knowledge

* It was, at that time, a matter of dispute between the great political parties of the country whether congress had the right under the constitution to carry on works of internal improvement.

is the food for the soul, and the only food that it will relish, or which will develope its strength and preserve its health. Knowledge, correct and universal, must be diffused ; the mind must be disciplined ; and all its almightiness must be aroused, exerted, to give to virtue its finish, and to man his felicity. Education must wake up a day in the soul, and give life, activity and energy to the whole intellectual man, or moral excellence is but a dream. Every son and daughter of our republic must be enlightened, or all our boasted acquisitions and possessions depart, and leave us to slavery and barbarism.

“ The history of the past demonstrates this. Where now are the nations which fill so much of ancient story ? Egypt has fallen and long since passed beneath the barbarian's yoke, yet Egypt was the nursery of the arts and sciences, and by her genial care many of them were brought to a perfection we emulate in vain. Athens has fallen. The Grove, the Portico, the Lyceum, the Garden, no longer echo with the wisdom and refinement of Plato, the moral sublimity of the Stoic, the deep thought, the extensive research of the Stagirite, nor with the amiable philosophy of the Gargettian. A dark night rests upon the scattered fragments of the earliest and loveliest of republics. But Athens was the seat of learning, the academy of Europe. Her sons were the masters of all that belongs to deep thought, extensive acquaintance with the phenomena of nature ; were rich with the creations of genius, and able to seize, abstract and body forth the beautiful, the lovely, and the sublime, in forms that shall remain models to all coming time. Rome too, once haughty mistress of the world, by her arts and sciences, as well as by her arms, now sits in solitude

upon her seven hills, sighing over her fallen grandeur and departed dominion.

“Why? Because there were wanting men of enlightened minds? Surely not for the want of philosophers, sages, heroes, statesmen, or orators. No, my friends, the secret of their fall is not in the want of knowledge, correct and extensive in the few; but in that the many were ignorant. A few only were enlightened; a few minds only were cultivated, while the mighty mass of intellect remained rude, rioting in the wildness of primeval chaos. It was in that general ignorance, with those millions in worse than Egypt’s darkness, that originated the diseases which corrupted the body politic and hurried it on to its ruin. The knowledge of the few was too weak to dispel the surrounding darkness, it gave but a feeble glare, and was soon overpowered by universal night.

“Let the past teach us wisdom. Let us avoid the rock on which were wrecked the hopes of all our predecessors. It is ours to wake up the millions—to pour the celestial rays of knowledge into the whole mass of human beings. There is yet an incalculable amount of mind unimproved. It lies waste, or overgrown with the noxious weeds of error and vice; or it nourishes the *miasma* to spread crime over our beautiful country and destroy all our fond and high-built hopes. Let me repeat it, there is no security to virtue independent of a high mental cultivation. Our moral superstructure must rest on mind—must be supported by the understanding, or it will have neither beauty nor permanence. As it is necessary each individual should be virtuous to sustain a free government, so is it necessary that the whole

should be enlightened in every branch of useful knowledge, to produce and sustain the virtue required. Each individual of this republic should be instructed in every duty obligatory on him or his fellows, and should know its importance and the best means of performing it. And unless this be the case, we have no security for individual virtue, nor for national independence. Well does it import us, then, to attend to the improvement of our schools. Our highest wisdom, our holiest thoughts and wishes should be turned to multiplying the facilities for giving every branch of useful knowledge to all, of all ranks, sexes, or conditions. We have already done much. Our citizens have not been indifferent to education; but they may do much more; and they will not have done their duty till the means of a competent education are within the reach of every son and daughter of this republic.

“ Permit me to add, our schools not only need extending, but the modes of instruction they adopt are susceptible of much amelioration. It is not the mere acquaintance with grammar, logic and mathematics that constitutes true knowledge. There is a moral and a mental discipline that is too much, and too fatally, neglected. Our schools should teach our children to think, accustom them to reason, to reflect; should impart to the young mind a knowledge of things, not merely of sounds; give it ideas, not merely words. Let our schools become nurseries of intellect, of moral feeling and virtuous habits, and then let them embosom all the children of the land, and we have a bulwark no power can break through—a defence strong as thought can reach, or necessity ever require. Each school becomes

a palladium of our safety ; each school raises up an army of enlightened patriots that shall fully appreciate, and triumphantly defend, our free institutions."

On the 3rd of February, 1832, Guy C. Clark was executed at Ithaca for killing his wife. At his request Brownson prepared an address to be delivered on that occasion, which, however, he says, "owing to the limited feelings, and want of attention to the reasonable requests of the prisoner, manifested by our county sheriff on that occasion, was not delivered. We publish it in compliance with the last words of the unhappy man to us, a few moments before he was launched into eternity by a savage law. We shall also publish it because it enforces a lesson we all have been too slow to learn.

"It was the first, and we hope it may be the last scene of the kind we ever witness. There were not less than 20,000 people of all ages who attended to see the poor man choked to death. Our village and places of resort on the roads leading to it were rife with drunkenness, gambling, fighting and the like. The iniquity committed by Clark was nothing in comparison to the moral evil occasioned by this public spectacle of killing a man according to law."*

In this address he arraigns the criminal code which "coolly and deliberately kills" a man, and "that law which made to protect character, property and life, is now made to prove itself a minister of death."

"I blame not the executioner," he says, "he but discharges his imperious, though painful duty. Laws should and must be executed. No good citizen will see them violated with impunity." And again: "I will not now

* The Philanthropist, vol. ii, p. 127.

discuss the propriety of that law which sternly demands blood for blood ; I will not now contrast the *lex talionis*, of which this law is a relic, with the mild and forgiving nature of the Gospel. This law is a law of our country ; while it is such, it must be obeyed, or its penalty inflicted if broken. He, by whose request I now speak, complains not of the law. To his sentence he submits, and is ready to answer its demands with his blood ; but he is not willing to leave his memory charged with the crime of *wilful* murder. He leaves behind him children still dear to his heart ; he would not have them, whenever they think of their father, curse him in their hearts as a wilful murderer."

The circumstances which led to the awful crime are so related as to palliate it to some extent. "These do not, indeed, prove him innocent ; they do not justify his act ; they may not exonerate him in the eyes of the law from the charge of wilful murder ; * but they must in the eyes of all good men, of men who are willing to be just even to the wicked, and who can judge what human nature is, and make due allowance for its weakness."

"Let us stay our curses, and deplore the circumstances which have produced the awful catastrophe." "Above all, do ye learn, to be lenient is better than to be severe, and be ye always more ready, more anxious to forgive than to punish."

A conversation with an Evangelical minister at about this time was reported by Mr. Brownson in these words: "I profess not to be a judge of politeness, nor to be able to decide on all the minutiae of what is termed

* In nearly similar cases, of late years, juries have acquitted the accused.

good breeding; but I have always supposed true politeness was a compound of good sense and good nature, making those with whom we converse at ease with us and with themselves. I had always supposed it far removed from rudeness and from any outrage upon the feelings of a fellow being. It treats strangers with respect, and is never inquisitive as to the state of their temporal concerns, nor does it presume to judge of their spiritual standing.

"Such were the old-fashioned notions of politeness which I had entertained, and which I had always endeavored to observe, when sometime since, I stepped into a public coach to ride some few miles to an appointment. There were two gentlemen and a lady in the coach. The gentlemen were Home Missionaries. They were quite social. I had hardly taken my seat, when one, the youngest of the two, took from his pocket a tract,—a pretty tract, of two leaves, say three inches long by two wide. Extending it to me, with a grave look and a solemn tone, meant to be impressive, he said: 'Sir, this is a most excellent tract. It is the most *searching* thing I ever read. There is something in it which goes directly to my heart every time I peruse it. Will you take it? I think you will find something in it *peculiarly* applicable to your condition?'

" 'With pleasure, sir; I replied. 'Your recommendation is high. If it answer your description, it must be of great value.'

"I took the tract, and soon read it through. It was addressed to *impenitent* sinners, couched in extremely abusive terms, and surcharged with a theology as revolting to common sense as contradictory to the simple

lessons of Jesus. In truth, it did not apply to me, and I felt myself insulted that a total stranger should present such a tract with the remarks with which it was given. I returned it to the gentleman simply observing that 'it is inapplicable, sir, to myself; if it be as applicable to you as you remarked I think you had better keep it.'

" 'But are you not a sinner?' he demanded.

" 'Sir, I am not accustomed to *boast* of being a sinner. My aim is to do right, I am not conscious of being a sinner.'

" 'Have you *never* sinned?'

" 'Sir, I make my confessions to my God.'

" 'Allow me to tell you that you *are* a sinner, and that if you do not repent, you will be damned.'

" 'Possibly, sir. Your tract, I perceive, is addressed to *impenitent* sinners; will you have the kindness to inform me what is an impenitent sinner?'

" 'He is one who has never repented.'

" 'You have *penitent* sinners, too, I suppose?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'And what is a penitent sinner?'

" 'One who has repented.'

" 'Is he a sinner still?'

" 'A sinner after he has repented? Certainly.'

" 'Pray, sir, what is the use of his repentance?'

" 'You will find out, sir, if you do not repent.'

" 'Very likely. But will you tell me what I am to understand by repentance?'

" 'A godly sorrow for sin.'

" 'I perceive you and St. Paul differ in opinion. St. Paul said that "godly sorrow *worketh* repentance;" you

seem to think that godly sorrow is repentance, not merely a means of effecting it.'

" 'Sir, you are a wicked man ; you are a man of dangerous principles.'

" 'I am surprised, sir. I am, I presume, a total stranger to you, at least you are to me. And as I have not expressed any principles in your hearing, I am at a loss how you should know my principles are dangerous, or that I am a wicked man.'

" 'Your *conscience* tells you that you are a wicked man.'

" 'Sir, how did you become acquainted with my conscience?'

" 'God knows your conscience.'

" 'Very likely, sir ; but how does it follow from the fact that God knows my conscience, that you do ? You would not have me infer that you and God are the same, nor, I presume, that he has made a special revelation to you concerning my case?'

" 'You are going to hell.'

" 'Hell ! Why, where is that place, sir?'

" 'You will find out soon.'

" 'Are you acquainted there ? Is it a pleasant place ? Are there beautiful landscapes, do the birds sing sweetly, and the people enjoy themselves well in that place?'

" 'It is a place of everlasting burnings, of endless, inconceivable tortures.'

— " 'It must be very unpleasant there. I have no great anxiety to go there, sir, and certainly had intended to travel to a very different place. But since you are

certain that I am going there, I wish you would tell who else are going ? ’

“ ‘The wicked.’

“ ‘Who are the wicked ? ’

“ ‘All mankind. There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.’

“ ‘How long do the wicked stay in hell ? ’

“ ‘Eternally. Long as God shall exist.’

“ ‘I am very sorry to hear it, sir, very sorry, since all mankind are wicked, and all the wicked must go to hell, and stay there eternally, all the world must be lost. I am very sorry to hear it.’

“ ‘They will not all be lost.’

“ ‘Some will escape ? Well, I am glad of that. Who are those that will escape ? ’

“ ‘*You* are not one of them. You are a wicked man, you are going to hell.’

“ ‘So you have told me before, though I must confess, sir, it puzzles me to ascertain how you should know it.’

“ ‘Your conscience tells you you are a wicked man, and that you deserve to be damned.’

“ ‘So you told me before, but I must insist on it, that you are not acquainted with my conscience. And, sir; I must assure you that I am unable to reconcile your remarks on my conscience with that civility which is due from one man to another, to say nothing of strangers ? ’

“ ‘You will tell a different story in the day of judgment. You will then wish more, and yet more searching appeals had been made to your conscience.’

“ ‘Sir, I make no man the keeper of my conscience. Whatever may be its decisions, it is a matter between me

and my God. It is possible, sir, that you mean well, that you would do me good, and it is possible that you stand as much in need of aid from me as I from you. You know me not. You cannot read my heart, and perhaps it were as well for you to read your own as to concern yourself with mine.'

" 'Do you believe the Bible?'

" 'Sir, my religious faith is between me and my God; it can be no concern of yours. I recognize no man's right to question me respecting it, and consequently I do not feel myself bound to answer your interrogation.'

" 'Do you believe the Bible?'

" 'Sir, I must tell you, what I believe or disbelieve can be no concern of yours.'

" 'Do you not belong to the Unitarians?'

" 'Sir, I would not speak harshly, but having told you my religious faith and religious connexion are my own concerns, I shall consider you as transgressing the rules of good breeding if you continue your questions.'

" 'Well, sir, I perceive you are ashamed of your faith. I do not blame you for trying to conceal it. Your conscience condemns you. I am not ashamed to tell what I am. I believe the Bible, and I belong to that class of people which in the United States is called Presbyterian.'

" 'I presumed as much, I am perfectly willing, sir, that you should belong to them. You may think you have thrown down the glove to me. Whoever or whatever I am, is at present no concern of yours, and as you demanded my faith in terms of rudeness, I shall not comply. This much sir, I will say, I was reared a Presbyterian, and for aught I know, am still a member of a

Presbyterian church, in good standing, having never withdrawn, been expelled, nor censured.'

" 'Be what you will, you are a dangerous man, of most profligate principles. It is unsafe to converse with you, you are going to hell, and I will say no more to you.'

" 'Sir, I presume you are going to heaven?'

" 'I hope so.'

" 'Well, sir, do you conceive good manners are a qualification consistent with the hope of getting to heaven?'

" 'I tell you, you are fitted for destruction, that you are going to hell, and I will talk no more with you.'

" 'It is well, sir; your conversation has been vastly edifying. But if you are resolved to give me no more of it, I must submit.'

" 'You are a bad man. You have wicked principles, and I will say no more to you.'

" 'Very well, sir, I am content.'

"So our conversation ended. The above is no fiction. It was a real conversation, in which nothing is added, or taken away, of any consequence." *

* Ibid. p. 202.

CHAPTER VII.

WALPOLE.—TEMPERANCE.—“THE UNITARIAN.”

As soon as Brownson decided to discontinue the publication of *The Philanthropist*, he determined to return to New England. The Unitarian Society of Walpole, New Hampshire, being then without a pastor, he offered his services, which were accepted, and in the summer of 1832 he was settled as their minister. Walpole, on the east side of the Connecticut River, was situated on a plain at the foot of a hill the highest parts of which are about 750 feet above the level of the river. The country around is beautifully diversified by hills and vales. A bridge, 365 feet in length, crosses the river to Bellows Falls in Vermont. The view from this bridge is highly interesting and sublime. In a distance of half a mile the waters descend in cataracts and rapids more than forty feet, though in no place is the fall perpendicular to any considerable extent; but below the junction of Cold River the Connecticut is compressed into a narrow strait between steep rocks, and for nearly a quarter of a mile is hurried on with great rapidity and loud roaring.

The new minister found much congenial and intelligent society in Walpole and the villages near by, and his settlement being made on terms sufficiently liberal for the enjoyment of many comforts and the purchase of such books as he most wanted, he lived here a pleasanter life than before. Here, too, he was freed from the malarial troubles contracted on the River Rouge in Michigan.

Soon after he began to reside at Walpole, Brownson applied himself to the study of the French language, which he mastered so thoroughly that, although he was never able to converse in this or any other tongue except that "in which he was born," very few Frenchmen were more competent critics of, or better appreciated, the style of their writers. The first book he read in French was Benjamin Constant's work in five octavo volumes "On Religion."

It had been his custom for a dozen years before, as it continued to be for a dozen years to come, when studying a book, to analyze it thoroughly, chapter by chapter, writing in books kept for that purpose a synopsis showing what each chapter or division was intended to explain, illustrate, or prove; and his own judgment whether, and how far, the author had accomplished his purpose, and in case of failure, the reason and extent of such failure. He was in after years called "a born reviewer," with little suspicion of the long preparation he had made to acquire the ability to state the views of the author he was criticising, with precision, brevity, and at least as much force as the author himself had possessed. If we knew more of the early history of the men who have left a great name after them, we should probably find that no substantial or permanent excellence is ever attained to without much pains, labor, and preparation, and that the most brilliant success is oftener due to application and perseverance than to extraordinary talents.

Constant's hypothesis that religion is a sentiment of universal human nature manifesting itself in variable and transitory forms adapted to the different stages in the

progress of the race from the primeval savage worshipping his fetich, to the latest and most civilized nations adoring one only God, harmonized with Mr. Brownson's view of the origin and progress of civilization, the view, in substance, of nearly all our modern theorizers, and was readily accepted, as was also the further hypothesis that each advance in the progress or development of the religious sentiment, being embodied in an outward institution, became the stepping-stone for a further advance. We had, he thought, advanced as far as we could go with the religions heretofore instituted, and had need of a new church in order to continue our progress. This church of the future must contain the principle of its own progress, or it would be, like all others, so fixed, inflexible, and inexpansive that it must in time fail to respond to the new wants growing out of the race's further advance. The Catholic church, he said, had failed, because it inculcated a too exclusive spiritualism, subordinating the body and all that is material, to the soul and to the spiritual: Protestantism was mere materialism, and erred in rejecting the spiritual. Both were 'sophistical, for neither recognized the dialectic harmony of spirit and matter, body and soul, inseparably united in nature. If, then, he could get rid of the opposition between spirit and matter, the priesthood and the state, faith and reason, heaven and earth, time and eternity, God and man, their union would give him the principle of a never ending progress, that no advance of the human race could outgrow. By looking at humanity as only the manifestation of the Divinity, absorbing the priesthood in the state, attributing no authority to faith save as conferred by reason, making a heaven on earth, and regarding eternity

as only the continuation of time, laboring for the development and satisfaction of all the wants of body and soul by the cultivation of man in his intellectual, moral, and corporeal capacities, there seemed no reason why the progress of humanity might not be carried on indefinitely, and his principle of "Union and Progress" never wear out or fail.

He was much influenced at the time by the sermons and writings of the Boston School of Unitarians, especially those of Dr. William Ellery Channing. These Boston Unitarians were eminent for their intellectual powers, as everybody knows; but they were not less distinguished for their pure and temperate lives, and their benevolence and philanthropy for all men and particularly for the poor and the oppressed. Their Unitarianism or infidelity was no doubt a reaction against the fanatical restrictions with which Puritanism had long worried New England; but, whereas in England the reaction was earlier and was manifested in the reign of ribaldry and indecency, with us, as Puritanism had been less destructive and less violent, so the reaction was slower and extended at first only to doctrine and belief. The moral reaction was a generation or two later.

As far back as the beginning of the year 1829, Channing's Sermons had suggested to Brownson a train of thought which ended in his disavowing infidelity and resuming the work of the ministry; but his first personal meeting with Channing was not till his settlement at Walpole. From that place he made repeated visits to Boston, a distance of about 90 miles by the stage road where he met the most distinguished of the leaders of

the Unitarian movement, by whom he was induced to remove nearer to Boston, and assisted in doing so.

During Brownson's residence at Walpole he preached an average of four sermons a week, besides giving a considerable number of Lyceum Lectures, mainly in Massachusetts, and public addresses. These were all written out beforehand with great care, though not exactly committed to memory, and they were seldom read again, the concentration of his mind, in arranging and writing out his thoughts, being sufficient to impress them on his recollection and enable him to repeat them when speaking, with substantial accuracy. Often, too, when speaking, he would substitute other matter that might occur on the spur of the moment.

It is said, with perfect truth, *Orator fit*, and certainly Brownson was an instance of the strongest. When he preached his first sermon he was awkward and so shy that he used to say that the perspiration could be wrung in streams from his clothes before he was through. By persistent exertion and study, however, he came in a few years to feel perfectly at his ease, to adapt his voice and manner to what he was saying, and to illustrate or impress its expression by appropriate gestures. His voice was of great compass and power, and being produced by the action of the abdominal muscles, was exerted without fatigue or weakness.

He complained of New England preaching that it wanted life, earnestness, boldness, directness. When he came into New England he thought that the people were incapable of feeling the power of eloquence. This opinion was soon changed, and he charged the coldness not to the people, but to the orators, bound by fetters

which restrained the soul's emotions, by an etiquette which forbade indulging freely its natural promptings, like the child, now following its grave, now its frolicsome humor; laughing when pleased, crying when grieved; and passing from the laughing to the crying, and from the crying to the laughing, so rapidly that smiles and tears are often mingled. The preacher thinks too much of himself, and his manner, tones, and gestures are strained and artificial, stiff, formal, and unvaried; whereas, if he felt his subject, forgot himself, and relied on the force of the truth he is uttering in the strength and majesty of his theme, he would be natural, and his tones and words the best that could be chosen. The most effective preachers have ever been the meek and humble-minded men who, thinking only of God, and truth, and souls to be saved, speak right on the words their burning charity inspires, and pour out their whole soul in a stream of strong, rushing, overwhelming eloquence, without stopping to correct their syntax, or to model their pronunciation after the latest approved standard.

Brownson's personal appearance as a Protestant minister was very different from what he became in his later life. Two inches over six feet in height, with broad shoulders and a large frame, his weight was less than 170 pounds. His bodily strength was unusually great, and his vigor was kept up by habitual exercise, both in walking and in working in his garden. His hair was black and brushed straight back from his forehead without parting; around his mouth he was shaved, and on the inward part of his cheeks; his eyes seemed black, but were of a mixed grey and hazel; his upper lip long, his hands long and broad. His dress, at this time and

until he gave up preaching was black broadcloth ; he wore a dress coat, what is sometimes called a swallow-tail, at all hours of the day, even at his studies , and a large square white handkerchief folded to a width of three or four inches in front of his neck, crossed behind and tied in front. He slept little, but sat up writing or studying till 2 or 3 o'clock or later. His diet was sparing, his abstinence from wine and spirits total, though he drank strong coffee morning and evening. His abstinence from alcohol was as much due to taste as to principle, and indeed he never heartily took up the total-abstinence fanaticism, though he often addressed temperance societies.

In an address " On Intemperance," before the Walpole Temperance Society, February 26th, 1833, he delivered himself very freely of the views he always entertained concerning this matter.

Intemperance he defined to be the immoderate indulgence of any propensity, and it attaches to eating, to sleeping, to a passion for dress or for society, as well as to drinking ; but the most prominent and pernicious form of intemperance is the immoderate use of ardent spirits.

The friends of temperance have gained nothing by their intemperate invectives against the criminality of the drunkard and the effects of his drunkenness, which they have dwelt on with painful minuteness, and reiterated till they have ceased to interest or prompt exertion. Drunkenness may be a misfortune as often as a crime, and the drunkard to be pitied and forgiven, and won back by the spiritual weapons of love oftener than by the carnal weapons of wrath and censure, when used by the philan-

thropist, who is better employed in investigating the causes and cure of intemperance than in describing its effects and pronouncing on the guilt of a fellow-being.

The most prominent causes of intemperance assigned are : 1. Idleness, or inactivity of mind as well as of body, which leads those whose minds are vacant, dull, because uncultivated, when surrounded with idle companions, as soon as they have exhausted their wit and the few topics of interest to them, to resort to the dram for exhilaration. 2. Debt, which is a cause as well as an effect of this vice, and the remedy for this is to check, as far as practicable, the credit system. "To give a man credit is often the worst injury you can do him: compel him to earn and pay for the article he buys, before he consumes it, and he may live free from debt, free from embarrassment free from intemperance. Would all our merchants insist on being paid at the time of selling an article, it would be better for them, and in the long run, 50 per cent. better for the community. The more free you can keep the community from debt, the more free will you keep it from intemperance." 3. Melancholy, or domestic unhappiness, grief over a loss or a disappointment, and a constitutional gloom or a disordered nervous system drive many a weak and unthinking man to the bottle. 4. Example, whether of parents, of society generally, or of associates. Intemperate parents have generally intemperate children, owing in part, no doubt, to innate propensity and hereditary transmission of constitution, but more to example. The example of associates, the dread of appearing singular and unsocial, and the detestable practice called *treating* constitute a snare which has ruined thousands of promising young men.

The most effective remedy pointed out is that of public opinion. Public opinion, it may be objected, is too weak for the purpose. Then strengthen it. How? By joining temperance societies, by giving one's name, character, and influence to make up and direct the public opinion desired. Get the intemperate to join that they may have an additional motive to become temperate; get the temperate to join that they may give their aid and the full force of their example to the intemperate. Let them not think they degrade themselves by signing a pledge. Be it that they can keep sober without binding themselves not to drink, still, if they have any benevolence for those who cannot govern themselves, this should induce them to unite in order to dart moral energy into the weak and empower them to keep their resolutions to abstain.

"Some," he says, "do not like the manner in which temperance societies are conducted. But I have seen the good they have done. I have travelled over a large portion of our country both before and since the establishment of temperance societies, and I am constrained to admit that with all their objections, they have done much for society. This admission is extorted from me, for I am opposed to self-created societies in general. I do not like the machinery put into operation by this wonder-working age. We have too many wheels within wheels, too many governments within governments. The age tends too much to association; people are beginning to act only in crowds, and the individual is fast being lost in the mass.

"Still the present is an extreme case, and after some years' hesitation and extensive observation, I have re-

solved to give to the temperance society my full and cordial support. The case is urgent; something must be done; nothing better has been devised; I am unable to devise any thing better, and I feel bound by all my duties as a father, a neighbor, a christian, a patriot and a man, to do all I can in aid of societies pledged to total abstinence.

“Besides, in joining a temperance society, we become responsible only for the one we join. We join the Walpole Temperance Society. It is in our own town, its operations are under our own control, subject to no foreign dominion. All parties support it, and really I see nothing to fear from it. Divided as we are in religious belief, in political and other interests, it is refreshing to have one topic on which we can unite, to find one spot where we can meet on common ground and unite, heart and hand, in a good cause. We keep too far apart. We should love each other better would we meet oftener, and we should find a better spirit within us, would we oftener find a point of union, and more frequently act together.”

In conclusion he asks: “What remains for us but to act? And why do we hesitate? Are we called to undertake some hazardous enterprise, to expose our lives, our character, or our property? Nothing of this. We are required only to abstain from that which can do us no good, and may do us immense injury. We are called upon barely to write our names, and to write them where it can do us no harm, but where it may be of immense good to us, and to our fellow beings, for time and for eternity.

"Fathers! Look on your sons---Do your hearts beat proudly as you see yourself living anew in them, and do you raise your hands to heaven for their prosperity? Do, then, all in your power to remove the temptations they have to become drunkards. Mothers! Look on your daughters. Would you that they become wedded to drunken husbands, be compelled to pine in secret, to wither, and die, unfriended and unwept, while they who should shield them from every blast, by an affection never failing, quaff ruin and death in the tavern or grocery? O, lend us then your influence.

"I appeal to the Christian, whose first duty is self-denial; I ask him while he prays that he may not be led into temptation, to beware how he places a temptation to sin before his brother.

"I appeal to the patriot, to him who loves his country, and who knows that without virtue liberty is but a dream; I entreat him to give his name and his influence to arrest the vice which corrupts even the body politic. I appeal to the philanthropist. I appeal to you all. I entreat you by all that is sacred in religion; by all that is binding in human duty; by all your love for your children; by all your desires for human happiness; by all your regard for your country; by your hopes of heaven and by your fears of hell, that you engage in this great cause with earnestness, and that you give to it your names, your influence, and your whole hearts."

At the beginning of January, 1834, appeared the first number of *The Unitarian*, a monthly religious magazine, published by James Munroe & Co., of Cambridge and Boston, the principal editor of which was the Rev. Bernard Whitman, pastor of the Unitarian Congre-

gation of Waltham, and the contributors to which were the Reverend Noah Worcester, James Freeman Clarke, and eight or ten more, including Mr. Brownson.

Whitman's great aim was to make Unitarianism popular, to gain for it a permanent hold on the heart of the people, by adopting a plain, direct, and earnest manner of address, both in writing and preaching. Brownson went further, and aimed with the democratic manner to carry along the democratic doctrines of the Gospel, for it is not the plain dress that wins the masses, but democratic thought giving utterance to ideas that are ever responded to from the depths of the universal human heart.

Brownson began his contributions with an essay on "Christianity and Reform" running through two numbers of the magazine. He calls attention, in the first place, to the war of opinion raging everywhere between reformers and conservatives. The spirit of reform is too far advanced to be arrested, often attacking the very foundation of social order and everything well established in government, pure in morals, or sacred in religion, and in the general alarm, we ask: Will the changes to be introduced settle down into salutary reforms or will they prove only mischievous innovations? If, he answers, the spirit of reform ally itself with infidelity nothing valuable will be gained; if to religion, the most satisfactory consequences may be predicted. He then proceeds to demonstrate that no salutary reform can be effected by infidelity, and that the spirit of reform is, in fact, the very spirit of the Gospel. "To effect any real reform," he writes, "the individual man must be improved. The mass of mankind is made up of individuals. There is no such

thing as reforming the mass without reforming the individuals who compose it. The mass of mankind is often spoken of as if it were a real individual ; but in itself it is nothing. It has no head, no heart, no soul, no character, but as these exist in its individual members. Each member of the great whole has a separate existence, will, powers, duties of his own, and which cannot be merged in the mass. The reformer's concern is with the individual. That which gives the individual a free mind, a pure heart, and full scope for just and beneficial action, is that which will reform the many. When the majority of any community are fitted for better institutions, for a more advanced state of society, that state will be introduced, and those institutions will be secured. What the reformer, then, wants is the power to elevate the individual, to quicken in his soul the love of the highest excellence, and to urge him forward towards perfection with new and stronger impulses."

And a little further on : " Nothing will reform the individual that does not appeal to his whole nature, and give full employment to all, especially his higher faculties. This infidelity cannot do. It addresses us as animals, not as men. It has no concern with the soul. It recognizes no spirit in man, and consequently, can appeal only to the body, to bodily appetites and bodily powers. It can give us no high and stirring views of our nature, no inducement to pure and elevated virtue, by assuring us that we are related to a Being who is infinitely great and supremely good, that we are kindred spirits and may attain to a kindred excellence with the everlasting God. In one word, it can make no appeal to the religious sentiment, can furnish nothing on which the religious

affections can lay hold, and from which they may derive purity, strength, and delight. In this it leaves out a part, and that the noblest part, of our nature."

"Now as infidelity does not propose to do this (i. e. give free and full scope for the just exercise and development of all our faculties), has never done it, and never can do it, it can produce no salutary reform. The institutions it would introduce would always be opposed to the developement of much of our nature, and to individual improvement; consequently, they would be mischievous. They would place the social and the individual man in a state of perpetual war; the spiritual and the animal nature in an eternal struggle. The bosom would be torn by contending factions; government would be one thing to-day, and another tomorrow, and nothing would be fixed but anarchy and confusion."

The alliance of reform with infidelity is not difficult to account for. "When the French reformer rose against the mischievous remains of the feudal system, and the severe exactions of a superannuated tyranny, he found the church leagued with the abuses he would correct. Those who lived upon her revenues bade him retire. The anathema met his advance and repelled his attacks; and he was induced to believe there was no place whereon to erect the palace of liberty and social order, but the ruins of the temple."

Reforms always start from among those who suffer from existing abuses, not those who profit by the abuses. Those who belong to the upper classes, or hope to belong some day to them, oppose all radical changes, and consequently all real reform. In most countries, the ministers of religion, especially the higher orders of the

hierarchy, make part of the privileged classes. They have their treasure in the existing order of things, there, therefore, they have their heart; and when they declare religion to be identified with forms that have become revolting, they drive the reformer from their company to that of the infidel. The hostility of the reformer is not to religion itself, but to the abuses presented under the name of religion, mixed with it, and by the vast majority of mankind identified with it. Be it ours, then, to separate the christianity of the gospel from the abuses that have grown up around it and been mixed up with it, and we shall find the spirit of christianity to be the spirit of reform. "What is it that Jesus requires? Did he not, in his mission, contemplate the production of greater purity of heart, a deeper sense of duty and of individual responsibility? Was not the gospel given to breathe new life into the soul, to urge it on by new and stronger impulses to a higher, a more abiding, an ever enlarging virtue? Did it not, does it not, appeal directly to the individual heart, and seek to kindle up a strong, undying love for all that is pure, useful, generous, and noble in character; and was it not expressly designed to impart the inward power needed to gain it? Is not here the spirit of reform, of a radical reform?"

"Should every individual become virtuous, acquire that purity of heart, that firmness of purpose, that love to God and to man, which the gospel demands, that moral growth which Jesus labored to produce, there could remain no institutions of an evil tendency.

"Make all men good Christians,—and all men can and should be,—all governments would become free, all

social institutions beneficial, and man's intercourse with man, harmonious, pleasing, and endearing."

Soon after the receipt of this article, Mr. Whitman addressed the writer the following letter :

" WALTHAM, December 26th, 1833.

" Bro. Brownson,—I have concluded to trouble you with another hasty scrawl, about my own business. We have received and printed your article. We think very highly of the performance. Nichols (one of the editors) says there is but one objection, that it is far above our other articles, and perhaps, above the mass of our readers. I said *no* ! We want some for the best educated as well as the poorest, and this is precisely what we want to make the variety we promised ; and we shall be exceedingly glad to have a continuance of *such* articles.

" But there is another kind of articles which you can write without any inconvenience, and which would aid us greatly. I refer now to a series of familiar letters on the workingmen's party. This is all familiar to you. The extemporaneous lectures you gave for me, if cut up into six or eight parts, would be all we need. This subject is just awakening attention. Dr. Channing spoke to me on the subject a few days since, and wished to know if this party were all infidels ! In Charlestown last election they chose every town officer of this class.

" Now my plan is this. You commence a series of short familiar letters to *us* editors—something in this way. You request to know something of the workingmen's party. You were pleased to say that I was qualified to give the desired information, etc. Then go on in numbers. I. Origin of party. II. What objects? Take

up in several letters each object—militia—imprisonment for debt—coöperative system—their own capital—borrowed capital—education. You could make each letter contain a distinct topic. You could speak as earnestly in favor of this class as you please. You can point out with a bold hand all the evils under which they labor, and do this in such a way as to convince the rich rather than irritate. You can state all you have yourself done in former days in this cause. This would be second letter perhaps. Then is the party infidel? is it political? And thus take up every topic connected with the whole subject. You may be assured that this would excite great interest *now*, and in *this very region*, as well as throughout the country; and you have seen enough of the business to avoid those absurdities of which some *ten hour* men are guilty. Now one letter on this *ten hour*. State what is truth on this point. Condemn those incendiaries who would put one class in opposition to another. Can you not begin the series for next number? No matter if you do not occupy more than one page. Then vary length according to subject. Generally we wish them *very* short, because we want a great variety of matter.

“Your letters in the Register have been much liked and generally read. I was however surprised yesterday to find that many in Boston did not know their author. Mr. Ripley had Christmas service. We had a goodly collection of Clergy. Mr. Francis, one of the very first men, spoke in high terms of the letters, and wished to know if you would not collect them into a volume. Mr. Emerson of Boston did not know the author, etc.

“Now I hope you will keep this subject before the public. You can do more than any one else to produce the right result. And when you have other articles prepared, we shall be exceedingly glad to receive them and will strike them off for pamphlets if you wish. You will see by our first number that I am about to commence a series of letters to unbelievers. My plan will not cross your track in the least. Kneeland is very active here, preaching in all our villages. There are some half dozen in each place. He has been in this place, good was done upon the whole—but it is time for us to be up and doing. When you and I exchange I shall wish you to give an evening lecture on Infidelity. I mention this now so as not to forget. What I publish I shall preach as a course of evening lectures. I shall go on something in this order—Nature and causes of unbelief—Opposition to gospel unreasonable—Religious opinions of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Spurtzheim, Ethan Allen, Paine, Kneeland, etc.’ Infidelity insufficient for wants of man—Knowledge—Belief—Free enquiry. All these are rather direct defences against Kneeland, Fanny Wright, etc.—and may be called attacks on infidelity. In all these there are no direct evidences for natural or revealed religion. They are the mere outposts. These will occupy this year. Then I have further plans which I will develope when we meet. In the mean time if you give me any facts or arguments in compliance with my request in the first number I should be greatly pleased. If you were willing to give an account of your own experience I should be obliged and great good would be done. State the time of remaining sceptical—unbeliever—state of feelings—views and projects, etc.—then what

roused your attention and led you to christian ground.
Excuse this. In haste.

“Yours sincerely,

B. WHITMAN.

“Rev. O. A. BROWNSON,

“Walpole, New Hampshire.”

The letters suggested by Whitman were not written. Brownson's other articles in the Unitarian were on similar topics to the first, with the exception of one in which he gives some account of the life and work of the founder of the Saint-Simoniens. He was much taken with the doctrines of this pretended religion, especially with that concerning property, which was to be distributed to each individual in proportion to his merit, and to revert to the common stock at his death. He found there also the doctrines he already held of the divinity in humanity, of progress, of no essential antagonism between the spiritual and the material, and of the duty of shaping all institutions for the speediest and continuous moral, intellectual and physical amelioration of the poorer and more numerous classes. These Saint-Simonian writings made him familiar with the idea of a hierarchical organization of the church, and tended to remove his antagonism to the papacy.

Whitman died in November, 1834, and whether or not The Unitarian was continued after the first year, Brownson contributed nothing to it after that time. His contributions to The Christian Register, of Boston, begun at Walpole and lasting through many years, attracted considerable notice on the part of the most prominent Unitarians, and were highly appreciated by the editors. In the beginning of 1833, Mr. Ripley wrote :

"BOSTON, 15 January, 1833.

"O. A. BROWNSON, Walpole, N. H.

"My dear sir, — As acting editor of the Christian Register, for the time being, I take the liberty to say, how much pleasure your valuable communications have given not only myself, but to our religious public in general,—and to beg that you will continue to favor us with them. The Register, as you well know, has been far from doing justice to the great cause, to which it is devoted. We are determined, if possible, to revive and improve it. But we must look to our friends for aid. We wish to give it some point, energy, and actual effect. Nothing can be better than your articles. Permit me to say, what I have often heard, that they are very much approved. Their style is pithy, lucid, and direct—just what is needed for a religious newspaper. Now, let me beg of you to do for us what you can. You have had an uncommon and interesting experience—let us be benefitted by the results of it. Anything local, matter of fact, relating to the progress of religion in your section, will be peculiarly acceptable. With great esteem, I am your friend and brother,

"GEO. RIPLEY.

"(Please direct to Mr. Reed as before.)"

A little more than a year later the same gentleman suggested the plan which two years after brought Brownson to Boston.

"BOSTON, 26th March, 1834.

"My dear sir, —I regretted being absent from town when you were here last, as I wished for a further conversation with you, relative to a ministry in this city,

with express reference to the infidel and sceptical tendencies of these times. Since I saw you, I have conversed on the subject with a few intelligent gentlemen, who agree with me in thinking that in all probability, such a ministry would have a salutary effect. I have supposed that if a man of talents, judgment and piety; wise as the serpent and harmless as the dove, were to come here, on his own responsibility, in the true spirit of Christian enterprise, to seek and to save them that are lost, his labors will meet with success. I have little doubt that in two or three years a society might be built up, of Christians plucked as brands from the burning,—of persons, who are disgusted with Orthodoxy and insensible to Liberal Christianity in any of the modes, in which it is now presented, but who would gladly hear the Gospel of Jesus preached in the spirit of Jesus, in a way to meet their intellectual and moral needs. From your own peculiar experience, and present state of mind, I am led to suppose, that your mission would be but fulfilled, by some understanding of this kind. You have rare advantages from your former relations to scepticism, and it appears to me are designed in Providence to act upon larger and different classes of men from those to whom you now have access. A large city presents the true field for your labors where you would meet with congenial spirits, and infuse your own soul into them. I know of no way to carry this plan into effect than for one to plant himself here boldly,—to take an independent stand,—to preach with the express purpose of gathering around him in the same way as is common with Methodists, Universalists, and for aught I know, with every sect in Christendom, except Unitarians. Perhaps

a newspaper might be connected—and perhaps not. All one would want of others, in this matter, would be, the countenance and sympathy of those who lead public opinion, and a guarantee of support, for a limited time. It would be an experiment, after all. I write now, merely to obtain your sentiments on the subject,—to know whether you would be willing to make the attempt,—and what you would regard as sufficient encouragement, to induce you to make it,—and what plan of operations, you would deem judicious. The matter is not at all before the public, and it will not be, until we know fully your own feelings about it. I hope you will write me with the same frankness which I have use towards you.

“I am ever sincerely your friend and brother,

“GEO. RIPLEY.”

Brownson felt at this time the highest veneration for Dr. Channing, and his third son born January 4th, 1834, was named after him William Ellery Channing Brownson, and became known in the family as Channing. Brownson had written to Channing expressing his high esteem for his writings and gratitude for their effect in his instance. In reply Channing wrote the following characteristic letter.

“BOSTON, January 11, 1834.

“My dear sir,—I have received two letters from you which, I fear, you think I have forgotten, from my long silence. But in this you would be unjust to me. They gave me great pleasure—very great—for in both you informed me that I had aided you in your progress to your present christian faith and hope. For this I thank God. I feel as if my life had not been lost, when I hear

of the obscurest individual who has received light and strength from my writings—how much more when I learn that a gifted spirit has received some impulse from me towards truth and perfection, and been confirmed by me in the consecration of itself to the service of God and mankind! I have read several of your publications, and though I cannot subscribe to them without some important modification, yet the consciousness which they breathe of your moral and immortal nature, the sensibility you express to what is great and good, your spiritual views of religion, your superiority to the artificial distinctions of society and your desire to raise up the mass of your fellow creatures, have interested me much. I know that a man's writings are not sure tests of character, and that a stranger, like yourself, not brought up among us, and who has made important changes of religion, cannot be regarded immediately with that entire reliance which we place in a long known and tried friend. Yet I cannot but look forward with trust and hope to the progress and extending influence of one who has expressed so simply and naturally the pure, high thoughts and feelings, which I find in your writings. You owe this letter in part to your communication in 'The Unitarian.' I was much gratified to find that you were to treat of christianity as a principle of *reform*. This is a noble view of it and the true view, and if brought out clearly and strongly, will, I think, do much good. The reform which christianity is intended to work in individuals, in the community, in the whole fabrick of society, in social relations and intercourse, in education publick and private &c., &c., is little thought of and still less felt. It requires a strong, bold mind to grasp it, and at the same time a wise, calm mind

to unfold it to the community, so as not to incur the charge of severity or extravagance. We shall gain one important step, if we can impress those who have attained to more enlightened views of christianity, and who are favoured in condition, with their obligation to labour unceasingly for the intellectual and moral redemption of the large class of ignorant. poor, depressed—if we can teach them to recognize, respect, aid their nature in its more unfavourable conditions. This benevolent, moral action on others will be to themselves the beginning of a great reform, and perhaps in no other way can they receive a stronger impulse to christian perfection, I desire nothing so much as that the class of christians to whom we belong should feel their vast debt to society, to that race for which Christ lived and died, and that they might throw themselves into earnest efforts for raising the intellectual and moral condition of *the people*. May you aid this direction of their minds and hearts. It will always give me pleasure to hear from you, though I confess I have given you little encouragement to write. Have you in your retirement the books you need? Perhaps I may have in my library some which you wish to see. If so, I shall be glad to send them by a safe conveyance.

“ With sincere regard your friend,

“ WM. E. CHANNING.

“ Rev. O. A. BROWNSON,

“ Walpole, New Hampshire.”

Receiving from the Unitarians of Canton, Massachusetts, an invitation to become their minister, Brownson resolved on the change, as leading him in the direction

of Boston whither his thoughts had tended ever since he had been in New England; and even before Ripley's suggestion, he had decided to take leave of his Walpole friends, who met and voted this commendation as a token of good will.

"WALPOLE, N. H., March 10th, 1834.

"Whereas a separation being about to take place between the Unitarian Church and society at Walpole, N. H., and the Revd. Mr. Brownson, their pastor. It is esteemed proper that he carry with him some testimonials of the friendly regard of a people who have for nearly two years past been under his religious instruction.

"It may in candor be said, that some differences in opinions have arisen between him and some of his hearers—but nothing which has excited unfriendly feelings (as we believe) on the part of pastor or people.

"It seems he is called to a more extensive field of usefulness, where he is likely to be rewarded in a measure much more adequate to the wants of a young family than he could expect from this small society. It is gratifying to us that his own personal interests are thus encouraged, and that this wide and extended field for usefulness is opened to him.

"Of his moral character here, it is without reproach, and from whatever has come to our knowledge, previous to his connection with us, nothing has appeared to call it in question.

"Whereupon this society unanimously recommend him to the church and society at Canton, as a gentleman of talents, capable of doing much good in his vocation,

and may with the divine blessing be a useful ornament in the cause of Christianity.

“THOMAS BELLOWS, *Chairman*.

“JOHN BELLOWS, *Clerk pro tem*.

“The foregoing being read, it was voted that the same be signed by the chairman and clerk, and presented to the Rev. Mr. Brownson.

“JOHN BELLOWS, *Clerk pro tem*.”

CHAPTER VIII.

CANTON. — FOURTH OF JULY ORATION. — THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER. — CANTON LYCEUM. — DIFFUSION OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH.

Wednesday, May 14th, 1834, Brownson was installed pastor of the First Congregational Parish in Canton, George Ripley preaching the sermon, in spite of its being against his “tastes and habits,” as he intimates in a letter transmitted by Mr. Everett :

“ My dear sir,—I cannot but regret that you wish me to preach your installation sermon, as my taste and habits lead me to decline such public services as much as possible. I preach, write, and think almost exclusively for my own people; but as these personal considerations ought not to weigh with me, for a moment, if I can oblige another, I will do my best to perform the service you request.

"I send you Constant, and I am much obliged to you for the loan of it. I have an interesting volume of Jouffroy, which is at your service, when you wish it.

"I am very truly, your friend,

"G—— R——

"Rev. O. A. BROWNSON, Canton, Mass.

"Mr. EVERETT."

Canton, on the Boston and Providence Road, was at that time about fourteen miles from Boston, though at the rate at which Boston has been swallowing its suburbs of late years, it may include Canton before these pages are printed. It had a population of about two thousand, and the value of its manufactures was half-a-million dollars a year. Several large ponds and the Neponset River supplied the water power. Brownson lived on an elevated ridge above the village, on which there were five or six other residences, each with an acre or two enclosed.

On the Fourth of July of the same year, Brownson delivered an address at Dedham, the county town of Norfolk County, in which county Canton is situated. In this oration he doubts if the assertion in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal," had not a wider meaning than our fathers suspected, or were able to appreciate; or if they intended to assert by it any thing more than the political equality of different communities, and the right of each community to govern itself. If so, Providence so overruled it, that in asserting the rights of communities, our fathers asserted those of individuals, and in declaring one community's rights

equal to another's they uttered the great truth of man's equality to man.

All experience shows that all men are not born with the same capacities, but there are original differences, intellectual, moral, and physical, which nothing can overcome. The equality Brownson contends for, consists in all men having a common nature, being brothers of a common family, with the same general elements of knowledge and virtue. As all have equal rights, one man has no rights over another which that other has not over him, and no one should have the power to derive any benefit from another without giving to that other a full and exact equivalent.

Even where equality before the laws is recognized, these may be so framed as to fall with greatest weight upon offences to which the poor are almost exclusively exposed, as for instance, the law of imprisonment for debt. But the most pernicious inequality of all, is in the want of education of the poorer classes which makes them the unconscious tools of scheming, selfish, demagogues. Give the workingmen education equal to that of the higher classes to whom alone are our seminaries of learning open, and they will be able to put an end to all inequality of property, of social condition and of political influence. The common schools are better than nothing, but they do not give the moral, intellectual, and physical training, disciplining, of the whole community, necessary for the formation of character, which he understands by education. Our higher seminaries educate us to be fond of distinctions, of popularity, and to look with contempt on the people. We want an education which shall raise our children above the factitious distinctions of society,

and teach them to value every man according to his intrinsic worth, not his position in society, the length of his purse, or the fineness of his coat. When the whole community is thus educated, we shall see laws enacted for journeyman mechanics as well as master mechanics, for the toilers who perform the physical labor of the community no less than for capitalists, land and stock holders, and corporations.

Brownson does not in this address indicate very particularly the kind of school he regarded as needed to carry out his plan of reform; but his known partiality for schools in which the mechanical arts were taught, point to what are called manual training or industrial schools.

He was far from being alone in his schemes for elevating the laboring class, as a class, by means of education and Christian culture. His Dedham address was published there at the request of those who listened to it, and the orator sent copies to many of the prominent ministers in the vicinity, which brought out the expression of views much in harmony with his own, as, for instance, the following from the distinguished pastor of Northfield.

“NORTHFIELD, MASS.

“Rev. O. A. BROWNSON,

“Dear sir,—I was much gratified in receiving from your own hand a copy of your address at Dedham, and refreshed and encouraged by the perusal of it. I had seen and read several articles from your pen in a monthly periodical, and had felt the natural desire to become acquainted with one whose views and aims seemed to accord so nearly with my own.

“ It has been objected to Christianity, that after so many ages, so little has been accomplished by means of it, for the benefit of the mass of mankind. I believe it was intended by its divine Founder to lend its powerful aid for the relief and enlightenment of the laboring classes amongst all nations, and to change the then existing political and economical relations of society. I think it has done something, and indeed a good deal, in this way in some of its forms of instruction and external polity. I would not believe in, or assent to, its divine origin, if I did not believe, that its practical principles were sufficient to effect such a change. ‘ Come unto me, *all ye* that toil hard and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.’ I believe that this refers to the actual toils and hardships of the poor laborers to whom it was addressed, and should not be spiritualized away or defined for the convenience of those who live on other men's earnings, to a future *state* where it is supposed this will be corrected, thereby defeating its purport and aim. The gospel was good news to the poor, *as a class*, and the poor were the laborers, whether held in actual slavery, as most of them were, or not. I believe it was intended to have its first effect *in the present world*, and if there is any one cause which has contributed more than any other, to defeat its influence, and render the mission of Jesus frustrate, it is that its ministers, as well as other priesthoods, have attached themselves to the privileged classes, and have lent themselves to uphold an order of things wholly irreconcilable with its principles, its spirit, or its aims. The clergy, as a class, have always been ready to come in for a share in the advantages of the privileged classes, and in return for the ease and convenience accorded to them

by these classes, to spread their broad mantle over them. But ministers elected by the Town committees, as they have been amongst us, can hardly form a distinct corps, aiming at corporate privileges, and we owe much to this circumstance.

“ Their sympathies are always with the rich and the powerful, and it seems not to have entered into their conception that the gospel was designed, or had any efficacy, to *change the condition of the poor as a class*. Some occasional alleviation of the actual suffering of particular individuals seems to fill up the measure of their charity to the poor. That cannot be Christianity which adapts itself to the social order which it was the prime design of Christianity to change. How can any man read *his* history, and thus interpret the mission of Jesus? The laboring class must work out its own deliverance with the best aids it can obtain from enlightened minds, honestly devoted to its welfare. The science of political economy, while it reveals the irremediable condition of the laboring class under the present system, will afford it much light to guide its deliberations and assist its efforts for changing its condition. Legislation will be a powerful instrument in its hands, when it shall acquire the strength and moral purpose to use it. I have thought from some remarks of yours that you did not impute much efficacy to governments for any purpose of this kind. What have governments been, and what are they now, but the combinations of the rich and powerful to increase their riches and extend their power? By what means do they *do* this? The history of the tenure of land and the state of labor everywhere and in all past time would answer this question. But the laboring class

have unfortunately been regarded always as beneath the *notice* of history, and the theories of science and philosophy as well as christianity have done *as yet* but little for its welfare. Individual character is very much formed by social institutions, and among these that of property in all its aspects is of chief influence. It bases itself upon a supposed moral right, however immoral may be the methods of its acquisition, under the present order of things. It asserts the right to get whatever it can get of labor or its fruits with the consent of the owner, without much regard to the circumstances under which that consent is obtained. This notion of property, false in theory and subversive alike of morals and happiness, seems to have obtained in free states as well as under more absolute forms of government, and yet this theory, repugnant as it is to moral right, has stamped its character upon the codes and administrative policy of nations, and this has been done and is done now by the combination of the property holders in all countries gaining by force or fraud the powers of government and the sources of wealth, and when both these have been concentrated in the hands of *a* few or *the* few, what have the laboring class to expect from their justice or their charity? What from a government in their control? Its legislation and jurisprudence, the ministrations of religion and justice, when held and directed by theory will afford no relief to the laborers *as a class*. The existing order is the natural result of the passions,—chiefly avarice and ambition,—in which morality has very little to do. All wealth is the product of labor and belongs of right to him who produces it, and yet how small a part of the products of its labor falls to the laboring class! How large a part of it is

wasted, and worse than wasted, upon the pride and vanity and voluptuousness of those who produce no wealth, and render society no equivalent for what they consume! Is it not time, then, for the laboring class to associate and seek by common counsels and joint efforts to recover what belongs to them? There can be no renovation of society except by bringing in the righteousness of God, which knows no favorite individuals or classes, to supplant the existing institutions in regard to property and power. Christianity is adapted to effect this change, and yet *it* has not done it. *The* christianity of those who live and profit by the present system will not do it. The rod of the oppressor must be broken, he will not throw it away. Thanks to our free political forms, the people can now do it without violence or wrong.

“ I regret that I have suffered repeated interruptions, and have not written as I could have wished. The subject is too extensive for a letter. I have thrown out a few thoughts loosely, but you may learn from them something of my views and the immense importance I attach to the instinctive movements of the general mind, in Europe as well as here, in which I trust I see a guiding hand.

“ I intend no imputations upon any one. I am dealing with elements and their combinations as I find them, and am looking to the methods of attaining to better results in increased welfare of mankind. I may say, and in this I perhaps differ from you, that I do not think any extensive and permanent reform can be effected without a change in the economical relations of society, and that such change cannot be brought about but by means of a just legislation and plan of policy adapted to

the rights and interests of labor. I confide all to your candour, stranger as I am, tho' you have not been unknown to me for some time, and I hope it may be my good fortune to meet you, and to see you at my house whenever you come into this region. In the meantime I hope you will not relax your exertions in this great work which will go forward, I am sure, to its great end the redemption of the laboring class from economical oppression as well as political, by whatever methods it may please Providence to advance it.

"With sincere respect and regard I am very truly
"Yours,

'SAM'L C. ALLEN.

"August 18, 1834.

"REV. O. A. BROWNSON, Canton, Mass.

"Note. I agree with you that the people have generally very little interest in the strifes of political parties. But there are sometimes conflicts in the government which divide the public opinion in which their welfare is deeply involved. Such, I think, is that in regard to the U. S. Bank, and that every man who owns a rood of land, or does a day's work for his livelihood would perceive a remnant of equality over. The people ought to rally round Gen. Jackson in support of his measures for putting an end to this mischievous and dangerous monopoly. This is a question between labor and the associated wealth of the country, between the few striving for more wealth and power and the laboring many, who have risen to an understanding of their rights and interests."

These men who, like Allen and Brownson, were so zealous in advocating the rights and interests of the laboring class, were not demagogues seeking to raise themselves up by standing on the shoulders of the workingman ; they were not incendiaries ; they were not anarchists ; but ministers in good standing of a highly respectable denomination, remarkable for the earnestness of their preaching, and their devotedness to the welfare of mankind, and had thought long and seriously on the question which they clearly foresaw was the great problem which would press harder and harder for a solution for generations to come. It is not solved yet, nor does it seem nearing a solution ; in fact unforeseen changes in the character of the population and some institutions of this country, have rendered its solution more remote than ever. The enormous immigration of persons not understanding, or not sympathising with our institutions and their spirit, together with the changes in the conditions of labor, and of business methods which followed our civil war, and were to a great extent the result of that war, have retarded such solution, and thrown us back in the march of civilization. But the problem is clearly before us, and must be met. He that would meet it fairly and profitably cannot fail to find assistance in the reflections and conclusions of those who were grappling with it sixty years ago. What Mr. Allen says of the "instructive movement of mankind" is worth attention, and when that movement extends over the whole civilized world and continues, and grows, for generations, it not only seems providential and "under the guidance of a higher hand," but the direction in which it steadily points must be that in which we are to look for its eventual settlement.

There are many selfish money-seekers who say "Après moi le déluge," and care not what becomes of the country or the world so long as they attain to wealth and power; but the lover of his race, his religion, his country, and his family should reflect that all these are greatly dependent on the solution of this great social question, and the longer the solution is delayed, the less peaceful and more hurtful it is sure to be. The sooner the social wrongs are righted, the easier and less destructive will be the reform.

Besides his letters which he continued to write for The Christian Register after his settlement at Canton, Brownson began a series of contributions, mainly philosophical, to The Christian Examiner, the well known Unitarian Review, edited by the Reverend James Walker, D. D., pastor of the Unitarian Church in Charlestown, and afterwards professor of philosophy in Harvard College, of which he was chosen president in 1853.

The first of these contributions was sent to the editor in the summer of 1834, in relation to which he received the following letter.

"CHARLESTOWN, August, 2, 1834.

"Dear sir,—We have sent your article on Constant to the press with a few slight verbal alterations, so slight that you will probably hardly detect them, or notice any change. We considered they were not of sufficient importance to consult you on the subject, as it would be attended with some trouble. I have directed the printer, however, to send by mail, unless otherwise ordered, to you the proofs for examination, and you will

be good enough to return them with as little delay as possible.

“ I thank you for a copy of your Dedham Address, which is this moment received. Glancing my eye over its pages I perceive that it is able and spirited. But I doubt whether I should go the length which you seem to do, in supposing that the great moral want of the working classes in this country at this moment is, to have their jealousies still further excited, and directed against the capitalists and accumulators. I need not hesitate to say, because you will perceive that my solicitude involves a flattering compliment, that I am extremely anxious that on this subject you will proceed, independently indeed, but yet cautiously and circumspectly. Keeping continually before your eyes the example of the great Reformer.

“ Very truly and respectfully

“ Your friend and servant,

“ JAMES WALKER.

“ REV. O. A. BROWNSON, Canton, Massachusetts.”

Brownson consulted Walker as to the advisability of publishing a selection from the philosophical writings of Constant, Cousin, Jouffroy, and others, in an English translation. To this Walker replied :

“ CHARLESTOWN, September 12, 1834.

“ Dear sir,—I have no question, that, if you could without risk to yourself get a work like that which you mention before the public, it would do good, and if it were extensively read it would do great good. But I have doubts whether such a work would be profitable,

or even pay its way immediately, or whether it would find at once eager and numerous readers. Still I may be mistaken in all this, as I am apt to be under-confident rather than over-confident about such matters; and besides, you doubtless are a thousand times more enterprising than I am, and will make light of my misgivings, and ought, perhaps, to do so. If you can find a bookseller who will take on him the risk, I can conceive of no objection to the undertaking; on the contrary, I am sure the book would, if published, do an important and timely service to the cause of truth and faith, and that you are peculiarly fitted to such a work. Dr. Follen, you know, once contemplated publishing a translation of Constant entire, and had proceeded some way in preparing it, and issued his prospectus of the same; but I believe he has relinquished the project altogether for want of sufficient encouragement. I ought to say the other French authors mentioned by you I only know by hearsay.

“We have read your article on the Principles of Christian Morality, and we shall be glad to print it in the Examiner. To my mind, though I never rely much on an opinion formed on reading a piece in manuscript, it is the most complete and scholarlike of any thing that has come from your pen. From the nature of the discussion it is harder to read and properly to understand and appreciate. We have made hardly a verbal alteration. There is one slight exception where you make the words ‘he had respect to the recompense of the reward,’ refer to Jesus, when in fact they refer to Moses, and we have altered it accordingly. We shall be glad, as I have said, to print the article; but we never can promise how soon; though it is probable we may do it in the next number.

We do not think it well to give another professed review of Fox, and therefore, by a slight alteration of the first sentence, shall give it as an essay, referring only to his sermons.

“ Very truly and respectfully,

“ Your friend and servant,

“ JAMES WALKER.

“ Mr. BROWNSON, Canton, Massachusetts.”

During the two years which Brownson passed at Canton he labored with great zeal for the mental and moral elevation of the laboring class who constituted the great bulk of the population. Aware that the young people would soon be the active generation he spared no pains to give a high and worthy direction to their purpose in life. In a sermon on Matt. vi, 33, to the young people of his congregation on Sunday, May 24th, 1835, he tells them that in a few days they will be the existing generation with duties to church and country, to God and humanity, which he would have them early feel and prepare themselves to discharge with promptness and fidelity.

It is important, he told them, that in the outset of their career they fix their minds and concentrate their energies on the object they are to live for. Shall that object be pleasure? Mere selfishness? Let selfishness become universal, and there is an end of all love and sympathy, generosity and disinterestedness, and they can only expect others to do unto them as they do to others, and the most miserable beings on earth are those who seek only to please themselves.

Shall the object be wealth? It can hardly be for the riches themselves. If for the gratification of appetite and propensity, that is condemned in condemning pleasure as the object of life. If for the means of gaining rank and distinction, what is their value? How long will they last?—No, there is a higher good, the reign of God, that is, of righteousness and moral goodness. When they are good themselves, they will delight to do good to all men. “To be good and to do good is the only object worthy of a man’s life. ‘And all these things shall be added unto you.’ It is wrong to think the path of virtue is obscure and pleasureless. God has not made the road to distinction and pleasure lie through the fields of sin. Every good man is a little stone cut from the mountains without hands, has within himself the principle of a growth that will fill the earth with benefits. He who exemplifies, in its perfection, a single moral virtue, he who discovers and places in the world a single new truth in morals, in religion, or in the philosophy of mind, outdoes the proudest of earth’s heroes, exerts a power greater than any king or emperor ever did or ever can exert. He commences a new creation, forms the nucleus of a new world, round which atom after atom shall gravitate, till it becomes a new heavenly body to revolve forever in a new moral orbit.”

Further to elevate the young people of Canton Brownson organized an association of men for the purpose of literary and general mental improvement, which was called a Lyceum, that being the American name for such associations. Weekly lectures were delivered to the public of either sex during a great part of the year, some by himself and some by eminent men from Boston

and its vicinity. A small library belonging to the association was made much use of by the members. The reader will, no doubt, read with interest the following sympathetic letter of the Reverend Edward Everett, then governor of Massachusetts, who had been invited to lecture before this Lyceum.

“ CHARLESTOWN, MASS., 14 September, 1835.

“ Dear sir,—Your favor of the 10th reached me on Saturday. It would give me sincere pleasure were it in my power to comply with your request, in delivering a lecture before your Lyceum. My engagements, however, are already so numerous, as almost to exceed my ability to meet them, with any degree of satisfaction to myself or usefulness to the public; and I have already, during the present season, declined so many invitations, similar to yours, that I could not with propriety accept it. My doing so would be just cause of offence to the numerous institutions, from whose service I have asked to be excused, for the same reasons, which compel me now to throw myself on your candor and that of my friends at Canton.

I am much gratified with your approbation of my Lexington Address. It was my express aim to give it the character, which you have noticed in it, that of a tribute to the high worth of the rank and file; the men who, without hope of rank, power, or emolument, bravely stepped forward and risked their lives for their rights and for their country.—To cheer, as far as I am able, the efforts of this class, has been with me,—as with you,—an object of which I have never lost sight.—Born and bred,—as you observe of yourself,—in obscurity and

straightened circumstances, and owing every thing I have or can hope for, to the public institutions and common free schools of the country.—I have ever felt a warm sympathy with the friendless young ; and ever taken a peculiar interest in all the efforts and means devised to equalize the conditions of life, by diffusing the advantages of education. I take the liberty of sending you my last printed address, where I have endeavored to hold out, in the character of Washington, an encouragement to the virtuous efforts of industrious young men, and to make labor respectable, by the example of the Father of his country.

“ I am, dear sir, respectfully yours,

“ E. EVERETT.

“ REV. O. A. BROWNSON, Canton, Massachusetts.”

The Unitarian clergy having appointed a committee of which Brownson was chairman, to report on the means for the diffusion of Christian Truth, he requested the other members to communicate to him their respective views thereon in writing. The letter of the Reverend Ezra Stiles Gannett, D. D., has been preserved, and as it cannot fail to interest the friends of this distinguished pastor of the Federal Street Church, it is here inserted.

“ BOSTON, April 9, 1835.

“ Dear sir,—I must ask you to accept a brief reply to your note of this week. I had forgotten that I was on such a committee, and have not recently thought much of the subject. At this moment it seems to me that the principal ‘means for the diffusion of christian truth’ are

“ 1. That the ministers should in their instructions combine the simplicity which distinguishes Unitarianism with the fervour which is common among other sects. I am persuaded that what the people want is an intelligible spirituality. They thirst for the plain and the divine. Let our ministers preach Unitarian Christianity just as if there was no other form of Christian belief in the world, but as if the world was full of sin, and this religion of ours was the infinite blessing which we believe it to be, and I suspect we should multiply the disciples of our faith faster than any other denomination. Let us seem to be in earnest, and wholly given to the work of spiritualizing men through the administration of moral truth, and one might almost work miracles.

“2. That the people should lead godly and sober lives as worthy disciples of a cause which they profess to value. If you should ask how Unitarians shall be made holy in temper and life, I might be put to some difficulty in finding the best answer. But this is not our question. That is, how christian truth may be spread? Now, no means of diffusing truth so effectual can be taken as the manifestation of its power and beauty through the character. Let Unitarians live as they ought, and be what they ought, and my word upon it, they would win respect, sympathy, imitation. Only let our light shine, that's all.

“ 3. That books of a suitable kind should be multiplied. We are sadly deficient in this respect. The books which we want may be divided into three classes.

“ 1. Scriptural, i. e.

“1. A new translation of the New Testament.

"2. A Commentary upon the Bible, but especially upon the New Testament. This we must have. All the other sects have theirs. And we must get one some how or other. It should be short, plain, popular, serious, sufficiently critical, but prevailingly spiritual.

"3. Books illustrative of scripture.

"2. Experimental and devotional.

"Books like Law's, Doddridge's, Baxter's, the Abbots, etc., etc., only free from the false theology which pervades their writings. Plain, earnest, affectionate and solemn, interesting treatises on Christian character. Oh, we want such books more than words can tell.

"3. Doctrinal essays and expositions.

"Where can an inquirer find an exhibition of Unitarianism? We need works of some pretension (size and labour I mean) yet suited to common readers. Besides these, we want such tracts as the Unitarian Association are about publishing, essays carefully written on particular points.

"4. That young men go forth to the ministry ready and willing to pursue it anywhere according to the opportunities which Providence may set before them.

"1. That more such young men as Patterson, Eliot, etc., should go out from the Theological School, disposed to endure the trials.

of a ministry in new places for the sake of diffusing and planting the truth.

- “ 2. That others be encouraged to enter the ministry without a regular course of study, but after spending a year or two in preparation. I wish we had many such ministers, men ‘full of faith and good works,’ whose zeal shall be according to knowledge, though they may have been prevented by the circumstances of early life from passing seven years at a university.

“ If these suggestions afford you any aid in preparing a report, I shall be glad, and if I should think of anything more worth troubling you with, I will write again. I should delight to see you and talk with you.

“ Yours very truly,

“ E. S. GANNETT.

“ Rev. O. A. BROWNSON, Canton, Mass.”

Dr. Gannett was noted as a preacher for his fervid eloquence, but in his religious views was as conservative as Brownson was radical. His nature was kindly and generous, slow to think evil, tolerant towards opinions with which he could not agree, and always giving them the most favorable interpretation. The next letter is a proof of this.

“ BOSTON, May 8, 1835.

“ Dear sir,—I have just read your reply to E. E. E. in the last Observer, and cannot refrain from drawing your attention to two sentences which you cannot have meant, I think, should convey the ideas which will doubtless be

received from them by almost every reader. I was sorry that your communications were brought to a close by the strictures of E. E. E. for they contained valuable and independent thought, and I was not troubled at any thing which you said in them. But in the present article you have let slip, as I believe, two expressions that will do you injustice with readers. You say that 'the Greek philosophy prepared the way for the introduction and triumph of christianity, if indeed it was not its elaboration.' Letting go the first part of this sentence, I cannot but start back from the import of the latter clause, when I consider that it comes from a christian minister. If christianity be 'the elaboration of the Greek philosophy,'—if we may but make the supposition—where is our faith in its divine origin? For on such a supposition either christianity must have been wholly the production, 'the elaboration' of human minds, or the Deity must have made the philosophy of Greece the substratum of his revelation—which is at least an unwelcome thought, jarring on our religious sensibilities.—I cannot understand you in this sentence as meaning by christianity a religious establishment, a 'cultus exterior,' because in this sense surely christianity was not an elaboration of *philosophy*.

“Again you say that 'christianity was established by the success of the party which rose against Paganism from the birth of the Grecian philosophy.' Can this be true in the obvious, which is the only, sense as it seems to me of the passage? Was not christianity *established*, i.e. enabled to gain a foothold in the world, by means of the supernatural gifts of its first preachers? And were not its early converts, whether among the Jews or the Heathens, with rare exceptions, men who knew as little of the

Grecian philosophy or its influence as of astronomy? Must not this remark also seem to be levelled against the divine origin of christianity?

“ I write this hasty letter because I am anxious that you should see what bearing the passage may seem, at least to some persons, to have, and if you are so disposed may at once send an explanatory word to the Observer—I hope you will go on and write and publish your essays, but I beg you to remember that to do good we must not only take our own position, but consider the position in which others—the community for whom we write—stand, and whence they see and must see objects under different aspects from us.

“ Yours very truly,

“ E. S. GANNETT.

“ REV. O. A. BROWNSON, Canton, Mass.”

The third member of the Unitarian clergy's committee on the means of diffusing Christian Truth, was the Reverend Joseph Allen, of Northborough, Mass., whose views are also inserted here.

“ Northboro', April 25, 1835.

“ Dear sir,—I feel somewhat at a loss to determine in what way to take up the subject submitted to us by the Barry St. Conference. Your suggestions are important, and yet I do not see that we are likely to gain anything by looking for some new principle of organization, some new point of union, and which may be the same for all the world. The fact is, as you state, ‘ the church is broken up into fragments ;’ and one saith he is of Paul and another he is of Apollos, and the different

sects are so organized and trained that it seems to me a hopeless task to attempt to bring them to act in concert, 'to meet in the same temple, devoid of fear, full of love, to pay their devotions to the same God.' Something may be done to soften the asperities of party and to promote good feeling among the members of different sects, especially when they live in the same neighborhood, or dwell beneath the same roof. But I fear that for the present at least, we shall be compelled—if we do anything *for the spread of Christian truth*—to do it by ourselves, as Unitarian Christians, or else to put our contributions into the hands of our Orthodox brethren to be disposed of as they may think best. It is true we do this to some extent at present, and I should be glad if our people would do more in this way to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. But I think we are bound to do something for the extension of Unitarian Christianity, or of our peculiar views of Christian doctrine. I agree with you fully that the *Unity of God* should not be made a rallying point, a principle of organization, and for the reason you give, that all sects are nominally Unitarian. And yet I would not discard the name by which we are now generally known, which, if we must have any, is as good one perhaps as we could find. I would retain the name, but I would always associate it with its more important adjunct *Christian*, and I would insist that men should be Unitarian *Christians*, not Christian *Unitarians*. In other words, it should be the first object to make men *Christians*, and quite a secondary one to make them *Unitarians*. It is the religious spirit that we should seek to awake, not a sectarian spirit, and I do not see why we cannot do this with our present

name and under our present organization, as well as tho' we were baptized with some other name, and had adopted some other principle of organization. Let us look at the subject as practical men. What can you or I do for *the spread of Christian truth*? Why, this we can do : we can labor diligently, in the places which Providence has called us to fill, to awaken a religious spirit among our people, to bring sinners to repentance, and to persuade them to be reconciled to God. In doing this we make them Christians, and in 99 cases out of a 100, they become, so far as they have any definite and intelligent views, Unitarian Christians. Let brother A. and brother B., and so on through all the letters of the alphabet do the same in their respective spheres, and thus will they too execute their high commission, and thro' their agency, many will be added unto the church, the great Catholic Church, which is one; and at the same time, and in nearly the same proportion, will the number of Unitarian Christians be increased, and the truth as we hold it advanced. I have dwelt on this point because I regard it as one of immense importance, one which should never be lost sight of, a due regard to which would do more to strengthen and adorn our churches, to spread the truth as we hold it, than could possibly be effected by any organization or social action whatever. Let us have such ministers as the late Dr. Parker, and such churches as that under his care, wherever Unitarian Christianity is now preached, and we should see that it would not long be confined within the narrow limits which now shut it in, that it would break forth, run, and be glorified. This is the point which I should like to have insisted on in your report. I should be glad to take up

some other topics, but I have neither time nor space, and as the subject is in so good hands, I feel assured that it will not suffer thro' my neglect.

"With great regard, I am very truly yours, etc.,

"JOSEPH ALLEN

"Rev. O. A. BROWNSON, Canton, Mass."

It was evident to Brownson that he and his colleagues of the committee were far apart in their judgment as to the best means of spreading Christian truth. It is even likely that when he had expressed his views of the plan to be followed, the two conservative members were joined with him to hinder any radical innovation. When the matter was discussed at the next conference, it was suggested that Brownson try his plan himself as an experiment, and remove to Boston for that purpose.

So far as concerns the attempt to collect the broken fragments of the church, and mould them anew into the one Catholic Church, nothing was done, for nothing could be done. There is an insuperable difficulty in the way of all efforts to unite the Protestant sects in one body. They can only unite on the basis of that Christianity which they all hold in common. Now, there are sects holding more or less of Christian truth varying all the way from ritualism to mere natural religion, and the only common ground on which they could unite must be on the denial of all revealed truth, or in other words by the elimination of Christianity itself.

Another Unitarian minister, one who had seceded from Universalism, and with whom Brownson had a very

slight acquaintance, recalled it to his memory soon after his removal from Walpole to Canton, as follows :

“FISHKILL LANDING, N. Y., July 3, 1834.

“Dear sir and brother,—You will probably recollect having seen me, some years since, at an association of the Universalists holden at Jaffrey, N. H. Since that time, we have both passed some changes in our habits of thought and modes of address to those who attend our public ministrations. I know but little, it is true, of the course of reflection, which has, at length, brought you into connection with Unitarians, except as I gathered it from some communications of yours in “The Christian Register;” but from them, I concluded it has, in certain respects, and to some extent, been similar to my own. I have sometimes been charged with the sin of apostasy, for leaving the Universalist connection; but I have never been conscious of guilt on that account. I never was a Universalist, in the sense in which Ballou and those of his school understand the term. I found that my views of Christianity were not agreeable to many, who were tenacious of the distinguishing tenets of Universalists. They disliked practical discourses, as dull, and to them, unedifying. Many were offended at any attempts to defend christianity against the attacks of infidels. In short, I found, that the sum of all that our universalists wished to hear was, that ‘all men will be happy at death, irrespective of their moral character while living.’ This kind of preaching, if properly garnished with sarcastic remarks on the doctrines of others, would go down very well; but I could not feel that my duty lay in pursuing

such a course ; and in entering my present connection I acted from the conviction that I could be more useful to my fellow-beings, and enjoy more uninterrupted freedom myself than before. I will only add, that I have not been disappointed.

"I know not as these details will interest you. You may consider them uncalled for, especially as our personal acquaintance is very limited. I have long wished, however, to write to you, and if agreeable, obtain a letter in reply. I have read your communications with great pleasure, and I am much gratified to learn that your mind is happily settled in the great truths of the gospel, with which our chief concern evidently lies.

"Your settlement is in a place where I was once considerably acquainted, where I have often preached, and where, I trust, I have some surviving friends. Probably many have deceased. There was Gen. Nathan Crane, who if alived must be quite aged. I was acquainted with Thos. Dunbar, Esq., and others of the family, who, I believe, are living. I think you must be pleasantly situated; your proximity to Boston affords many advantages.

"I have now been two years in this place. The society is not large, but is increasing. The congregation has doubled within the past year. Mr. Ripley of Boston lately visited me; tarried in the immediate neighborhood several days, and officiated one Sabbath greatly to my own and the society's satisfaction. We are seldom visited by brethren from a distance, and my exchanges are with the ministers in New York only, about once in a year each.

"Be pleased to make my respects to such friends as may remember me, and believe me,

"Yours with Christian affection,

"EDWARD TURNER.

"Rev. ORESTES A. BROWNSON,

"Canton, Norfolk County, Mass."

CHAPTER IX.

THE SOCIETY FOR CHRISTIAN UNION AND PROGRESS.

DURING the winter of 1835-6, Brownson decided to give up his congregation in Canton and look for a larger field for his labors, one where he believed he could be more useful.

In the beginning of 1836 he accordingly removed to Mount Bellingham in Chelsea. This town had formerly been a ward of Boston, but had been incorporated as a town for one hundred years. It is separated from Boston by the Charles River, about a mile and a half in width. The Winnesimet Ferry, leading from the foot of Hanover Street in Boston to this town, is probably the oldest establishment of its kind in America. The first grant was made in 1631.

Mount Bellingham, situated about a mile east from the ferry, was high enough to command an extensive view of Boston, East Boston and Boston Harbor, as well as of Charlestown, Malden, Saugus, Lynn, etc., and even of the blue hills of Canton. The road over Mt. Belling-

ham just before reaching the summit, opened to the right and the left for a space so as to enclose an elyptical field of several acres known as "The Common," facing which were some half-a-dozen pleasant houses. One of these, on the north side, became Brownson's residence.

Brought up in the picturesque and mountainous scenery of Vermont, he had early acquired a taste for beautiful landscapes, high hills, and pure air, and this taste was fully gratified here, and he also found delight in his favorite exercise of gardening. Nature had done as much for Mt. Bellingham as for any of the justly celebrated suburbs of Boston,—perhaps to compensate for the rockiness of the soil,—but art had done less. Possibly it was owing to the slight cost of transportation by the ferry, but the fact seemed to be, that the residents of Chelsea were mostly of a poorer class than some of the other suburbs, and consequently were less prodigal of money in the ornamenting of their village.

During the months of May and June, 1836, Brownson held religious meetings in Lyceum Hall, Hanover Street, Boston. On the last Sunday in May he began the organization of a religious society for Christian Union and Progress. In giving the earlier notices of the meetings the name of "Social Reform Society" was assumed, but that name was now dropped as being expressive of only one part of their object. Strictly speaking the Social Reform Society never had any existence. On the Sunday mentioned he preached a discourse on the "Wants of the Times," explaining the objects of the society.

It had been published that out of a population of about 70,000 persons in the City of Boston, between

twenty and thirty thousand were not regular attendants upon any religious meeting, and it was a fact which no one could fail to observe that there was even then a growing indifference to religious institutions in our whole country. Many were dissatisfied with the regular churches, and inclined to infidelity. From this class Brownson sought to gather his new society.

His first object was to present a broad ground of union for all the various divisions and subdivisions of the Christian church, by overlooking the peculiar views in which one sect differed from another, and seizing upon what was held in common by all sects, save "*Free Enquirers or Atheists*," and Jews, Pagans and Mahometans.

Boston was the place where the experiment could best be made; for there, more than in any other city of the Union, were found the necessary elements of success,—intelligence, philosophy, benevolence, liberality, and love for moral and religious investigation,—and religious differences counted for less there than elsewhere. Moreover, as from Boston went forth the voice which called into existence our Republic and gave it freedom, from the same place should in the order of things, go forth the voice which should from its shattered fragments call together the new Christian church, and secure it true Christian liberty.

Another object of the society was to encourage moral and religious, individual and social progress, which was taught by Jesus and practised by the early disciples. Here all men would meet on a common level before a common creator, and wealth would not be suffered to obtrude the badges of its distinctions by the mercantile

appropriation of seats in these assemblies. All the exclusive ways of getting to heaven individuals without moral righteousness which sects have arrogated to themselves and the priesthood profited by, as if the grace of God could be grasped by a worldly and selfish monopoly, would be abandoned, as contrivances for private advantage, or delusions of self-love. The religious principle is one of vast power which had been chiefly used by the privileged classes to hold the laboring classes in subjection to their sway. It was time it should be brought with all the lights of the age to the guidance and aid of the masses.

The society for Christian Union and Progress was in part organized on the 29th of May, 1836, the day on which Brownson delivered his discourse on the Wants of the Times, in Lyceum Hall; but its organization was not completed till the first of the following July, when it met for worship in the Masonic Temple where it continued, except for a short period, to hold its meetings during the regular hours of religious service on every Sunday till the end of the year 1843. The number of members of the society was not great; the congregation which came together may be set down on an average as consisting of at least five hundred persons, of both sexes, chiefly under middle age. The individuals composing the congregation were continually changing, though less so later than at first. When the novelty of the thing wore off the greater part of those who attended the preaching were regular attendants. Many of those who started with the society, who were for a time its warm and efficient friends, afterwards abandoned it, some because they left Boston, and some because the preacher ceased

to interest them, and others because they became convinced that the preaching was false in doctrine or mischievous in tendency. Some few were faithful from the first to the last, and were by far the larger part of those with whom the preacher was able to form a personal acquaintance.

The majority of the members of this society belonged to the laboring class, and were poor rather than wealthy. The only difficulty the society had to encounter was the want of pecuniary means. Some assistance was rendered it by a few among the wealthy, but in general the wealthy did not consider it deserving their support. They looked upon it as likely to breed discontent among the working-men and as likely to increase the hostility of the poor against the rich. But the society struggled along even though the times were exceedingly unfavorable, insomuch as not a few of its best friends were thrown out of employment and therefore deprived of the means of aiding it, and never despaired of its continuance and future success. With regard to the objects and doctrines of this society there remains but little to be said. The reader has been informed of the purposes and opinions of the preacher, the leading design of which was given in the Discourse on the Wants of the Times, of which Miss Harriet Martineau was good enough to append the greater part to her work on America, thereby contributing to a considerable circulation of it both at home and abroad. In addition to the statements contained in that discourse it may be said that the motives which led to the formation of the society were twofold. The first was purely personal. He who proposed to himself to be its minister was afflicted with the very pernicious habit of

thinking for himself, and of saying in his discourses precisely what he thought. Whoever knows anything of parishes knows that of all men in the world such a one is the least fitted to be a parish minister. He breeds disorder, discontent, and division, and must soon quit his parish or see it divided. Few of the country parishes could bear division. If some three or four men become dissatisfied with the minister and withdraw from the parish, the parish becomes too feeble to support the minister. To this result this same preacher would inevitably be driven, let him be settled over whatever parish he might.

In order to save himself from the trouble of moving from parish to parish, and to avoid the evil of disturbing the quiet and gentle naps of old parishes, he chose to come to Boston and attempt to call around him a society who would like him none the less for his independent thinking and plain spokenness. Furthermore in the city he might hope, if some were displeased with his preaching and should therefore leave him, others might be found to supply their places.

The other motive was of a higher nature, and one of more general interest. This was to gather into a society and bring under religious influences men who were dissatisfied with the ordinary ministrations of the divine word in the regular churches, and were somewhat inclining to open infidelity. In order to do this, it was evident that there must be in the preacher a departure from the common style of preaching in matter as well as in manner. He could not hope to bring into a religious society those who were dissatisfied with all religious societies unless he had something to offer which no

others had. If he but preached the same doctrines, that is, if he preached Christianity only under the same aspects as others presented it, although he might be more or less energetic in his manner, what success could he hope for? It was obvious from the first therefore that he must aim to establish a society which should be distinguished by broad lines from all existing societies.

How and by what should it be distinguished? In order to answer this question it was necessary to ascertain what were the causes of dissatisfaction with the churches as they were, and how far these causes could be, or ought to be removed.

The dissatisfied were of many classes. There was, in the first place, the Free Inquirer. He was dissatisfied, because he felt that the church fettered inquiry, and did not sufficiently respect the rights of the mind. There were in the next place the anti-formalists, persons craving something more vital, spiritual, than anything they found, or seemed to find in the regular churches. There were pious people, inclining to mysticism, but still bold advocates of mental independence and free inquiry and free speech. Then came the reformers, the men and women ready to enlist in the great army of Reform, and to do battle heartily and effectually against the world and the devil. These were subdivided into almost innumerable classes. There was the abolitionist, dissatisfied with the church on account of its insensibility to the sin of slavery; there was the moral reformer, incensed against his old minister because he did not insist more on the observation of the seventh commandment and other kindred commandments, and last, though not least, the genuine Loco-foco, or social reformer, the

opponent of privilege, of the factitious distinctions of society, and the fearless champion of equality. He was dissatisfied with the church, because in his view it was aristocratic, and with the preaching he heard, because it seemed to him calculated to make the poor contented with their lot and submissive to their masters, rather than to awaken in them a sense of their rights, of the dignity of their nature, and the determination to be men, to act like men, and to command the respect due to men. These were the principal classes of the dissatisfied, and they agreed in nothing except in their dislike of the church as they found it, and in a vague longing for something better.

How far were some or all of these justified in their dissatisfaction with the church? It was an invidious question, and for the preacher a dangerous one. By this question he seemed to summon his brother clergymen and their opponents to the bar, and to constitute himself the judge of the matters in dispute between them. But this could not be helped. If there was any apparent want of modesty, it might possibly be as much owing to the necessity of his case as to his heart.

How far was the dissatisfaction justifiable? Two things were thought by him who was obliged to decide, to be justly laid to the charge of the church : 1, General unfriendliness to free inquiry, and 2, too great indifference to the progress of society. To these he added of his own accord another, that the standard of morality which the church held up to men of the world fell far below the Christian standard. The case then stood thus; the church, taking it as a vast body here and elsewhere, is unfriendly to free inquiry, indifferent, if not opposed,

to social progress, at least not making social progress one of the direct objects of its labors, and it does not hold up the Christian standard of morals.

Ought the church to encourage free inquiry? Ought it to make social progress, or which is the same thing, the melioration of the poorest and most numerous class, as he expressed it after Saint-Simon, the constant aim of its exertions? Ought it to hold up to men of the world that standard of morality which Jesus held up? So thought the preacher, and so he was ready to maintain.

This laid down as certain, then the society to be formed must, to accomplish the object for which it was needed, be distinguished from all existing societies by three things : 1, By the direct advocacy of free inquiry, and by practising it; 2, by legitimating the melioration of the condition of the poorest and most numerous class, as a Christian work; and 3, by contending for a purer standard of morality than the church contended for.

These three things were to constitute the peculiarity of the Society for Christian Union and Progress. In all other respects it might or it might not agree with all other religious societies. As to what were called Christian dogmatics, it might be orthodox or heterodox. He who held to the Christian morality, allowed free inquiry, and was desirous of promoting social progress, could be a member, and might perchance find it his home. This was all that was needed as a condition of membership. No questions, however, were needed. He who disliked free inquiry, who was opposed to social progress, was not likely to seek membership, for he would not find the preaching acceptable.

The principles being determined in Brownson's own mind on which he would make the effort to collect a society, he came to Boston and commenced preaching there. He made one mistake, and he made it in deference to the advice of his friends. It was an unpardonable mistake, because it was a departure from his first principles, seen more clearly afterwards than it was at the time. He made one mistake. He began his operations with a particular class. Whereas he should have come into Boston and opened his place for preaching, without appealing to any one in particular, leaving it to the free will of the citizens to come and hear him or not, and to come from which of the two great divisions of society they might. But he began with the workingmen, and with the most odious part of the workingmen, the Trades Unionists.

Two bad consequences resulted from this. First, those who were prejudiced against the Trades Unionists, became suspicious of his movements in advance, and disposed to condemn rather than to encourage him before he could make the objects he had in view distinctly seen. In the second place, by appealing directly to this class of the workingmen, he very naturally led them to expect greater sympathy from him than he might feel, and to think that they had a right to demand of him a more direct support of their doctrines and objects than he might be disposed to give.

There were some reasons for the course he was advised to take. These persons were those who were perhaps the most dissatisfied with the church, and its ordinary ministrations, and would be the most ready to join a society like the one he wished to form. Moreover,

he sympathized deeply with the sentiment by which they were moved, although in doctrine and as to measures he did not in all cases agree with them. He wished also to baptize their cause, and give it the aid of Christianity, and thus save them from infidelity, while he gave to the reform they sought the only support which would be at all sufficient to sustain it. They were the ones who must necessarily make up a large portion of the society, for they were those with whose views on certain topics he most agreed. But he should have made no direct appeal to them, and have raised in them no expectations but those they would have obtained from the doctrines set forth.

One error always paves the way to another. Having committed this mistake, which seemed to give a pledge on the one hand, and which created a prejudice on the other, he suffered himself to be affected by both, when he should have paid no regard to either. He sought by bringing out one side of his doctrine to show his friends, the workingmen, that he was as sincerely and as heartily bent on reform as they were. While he was doing this, the opponents of the workingmen only found their prejudices confirmed. He then sought, by bringing out another side of his doctrine to show that these prejudices were unfounded, that though he was a reformer he was not a destructionist; that he was levelling upward, not downward. But while he was doing this, the workingmen, who have always been deceived or betrayed by those who professed to be their friends, became dissatisfied or distrustful, and were disposed to leave him. He should have gone straight ahead, and left those of both classes to come or go as they pleased, without any

efforts at explanation to gain either. While he was thus retarding the growth of the society, however, he was gathering wisdom from which he would profit.

It must be obvious at first sight, that a society gathered in the manner he proposed to gather one must necessarily take to a great extent the shape and coloring of the mind of its minister. Everything depends on him, and it is judged, so far as it is a society, by his views and character. It is evident, too, that if he be a man of any strong points of character, that he cannot escape censure, for he will necessarily hurt somebody. In any case, a measure like that he attempted could not be expected to be approved by everybody. No man, if he be at all independent, if he have the least shade of individuality, can gain everybody's confidence. Many will approve his avowed purposes, but will doubt whether he honestly seeks them or takes the most judicious measures to effect them.

The citizens of Boston generally were much pleased with the idea of having these disorganizers, agrarians, infidels, as they called them, gathered into a religious society and brought under religious influences; but they had some doubts whether he who undertook to do it, was the proper person to do it, and probably they were far from being prepared to concede him so much as he needed to do it. They were far from being willing to allow him to animadvert freely on what was faulty in existing institutions, whether of church or state, and to entertain his hearers with any projects of reform beyond those of individual reform. They were desirous that those violent democrats should become good Christians, they were willing they should have a

church of their own and a minister of their own choice, but they were not willing that the minister should in his preaching depart far from the old beaten track. They did not seem to reflect that these "violent democrats" had grown weary of the old beaten track, and that if they were to be brought under religious influences, it was only by doctrines and views of doctrines, which in some cases would contrast strongly with those which were weekly dealt out in the established churches. These "violent democrats" must see that religion has a democratic side, or they will not embrace it. They have come to the conclusion that the churches in our cities are aristocratic, not in practice merely, but in doctrine and tendency. They believe the clergy are aristocratic, not because they are well dressed and wear a black silk gown, but because they preach doctrines which tend to uphold the few and to keep down the many. It is not because the educated clergy are too refined, too profound for their tastes and understandings, that they dislike their preaching. They do not stay away from the churches because the minister shoots over their heads, because he does not let himself down to their capacities, but because he does not come up to their ideas of truth, because he harps on an old worn out string, because he says nothing that means anything, or because he says that which means what they do not believe. What was to be done? If these persons were to remain democrats, they must have democratic preachers, or they would have none. Should their democracy be beaten out of them? That would be a work Brownson would not like to undertake, both because he did not believe it ought to be done, and because he knew very well it could not be done.

The matter was plain then. Either those persons were to be gathered into no church, to be left without any faith in christianity, or christianity must be so preached as to enlist their democratic sympathies, and to meet their democratic wants. Well, can christianity be so preached in truth? Does he who represents christianity as teaching the great doctrine of man's equality to man, as frowning upon all the factitious distinctions of society, as undermining the worship of mammon, as demanding the elevation of the law, and as bidding us to reverence the really good and great, the God-created being though born and lying in a manger, misrepresent christianity? If not, then was he authorized to preach what he called the democratic side of christianity, and it is all the democracy he ever preached, or ever wished to preach. Furthermore, is it allowable for a christian minister to point out wherein the church, the state, and individuals do transgress the principles here implied, to point out the causes which lead them to transgress, and the means by which they may be brought back to their duty? If so, he was authorized to do by christianity all that he attempted to do, and all that it was necessary to do. in order to bring those so much dreaded radicals within the pale of the church.

From these remarks it may easily be inferred what was the general strain of his preaching. He found himself addressing, indeed he intended to address himself to the discontented, not to win them to a church, but to Christ. He found some unbelievers, and he endeavored to prove to them that religion is true, and that the unseen and unknown is the only real and abiding, and he had some success. To the free inquirer he addressed

himself as a fellow inquirer. He said he had a right to inquire, and he endeavored to show him that christianity recognizes this right. To reformers of all classes he said that he too was for reform, and that christianity is the religion of progress. To the social reformer he said, there is indeed much in society that is wrong. There is too much inequality, too great a distance between man and man. The inequality in our social condition is not of divine appointment; it comes, in the first instance, from the ignorance and depravity of individuals, and it becomes in its turn the fruitful source of all the evils of an individual or a social character. He would have it removed as speedily as might be without injustice to individuals, not in a violent and arbitrary manner, but by elevating the tone of feeling, by correcting our estimate of what is true greatness, and by keeping ever agitating the matters, and forcing men by the power of truth to adopt such measures as must have an equalizing tendency.

This is the way he preached. Many missapprehended him and took offence. Many supposed him visionary, but the general belief was that he excited the poor against the rich. I will by no means say it was not so, and I shall offer no apology if it was so. The rich can take care of themselves. The most exciting, and I believe the most wicked, if so it be, of any sermons he ever preached, was that which he preached one Sunday in June, 1837, and which was published as he gave it to his congregation, though it was extemporaneous. Those who did not hear him might judge by that how he sometimes preached, and perhaps might see by it that were

he disposed to sound the war note of the poor against the rich, he could do it with effect.

Brownson felt that he had made a great sacrifice in leaving Canton to come to Boston for the purpose of saving the community from infidelity, but from the very first he met obstacles which he had been far from foreseeing. He was accused of being an infidel himself. The sermon he preached on Sunday morning, July 10th, 1837, was very severely denounced as unchristian. As the discourse was extemporaneous, the following account of it is taken from Miss Elizabeth P. Peabody's notes. She writes :

" July 14th, 1837.

" MR. BROWNSON.

" Dear sir,—I heard, much to my astonishment, this morning, that a most excellent lady said, that she had heard from several spiritual minded and liberal Christian friends, who heard your sermon last Sunday, that it was blasphemous,—that you asserted in it that it was not *necessary* to believe in a God,—and that all the clergy were infidels, etc., etc.

" It happened that I was present at that sermon,—and with those around me, was very much affected and stirred up by the glowing faith in Christ, which so strongly pervaded it; and that the first words I heard respecting it, after it was over, were from a lady of most careful religious education and of early piety, who exclaimed—' This is preaching Christ.' Moreover, when I came home, I began to write it down in my journal and I wish you would print in your paper my sketches—feeble as they are—for I think even they will be sufficient to show that

this report which has gone abroad is widely untrue. If I had not heard you say that you found it almost impossible to remember these unpremeditated discourses yourself, I should recommend you to write it out and print it, but you have given so very poor a sketch of your first day's sermon, that I think I shall do better than yourself in recollecting. I copy it just as it is in my diary.

"Yours with great regard and respect,

"ELIZ. P. PEABODY."

"Mr. Brownson preached this morning on the text, 'Happy are ye, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for ye shall be filled.' He began with saying that there are in every age of the world, under all circumstances, men who sigh and yearn, who hunger and thirst for a righteousness beyond any they see around them. There is an ideal in their secret thoughts of a purity, an elevation, a devotion, a humanity, entirely above the standard of the community around them, entirely beyond that which any individuals of it have attained. They have faculties and aspirations which nothing presented as duty to be done, can exhaust, which nothing below God can fill, which infidelity and atheism cannot quench, and which shoot up even in the most depraved towards their object; for the infidel and the atheist sigh even though they know not what they want.

"And this universal fact is very strikingly manifested in the age when Jesus came into the world. He is called the 'desire of the nations.' The prophets of antiquity had sighed for a deliverer. And there are many indica-

tions of the earnestness with which individuals in that age, looked to something better than had been attained, of the yearning after a purer righteousness, a higher condition of humanity, a new life, not for the individual merely, but for society, for the race.

“ This righteousness may have been desired by the individual for himself, for it is true that no individual can ever be filled with anything but a pure spiritual righteousness; yet the hungering and thirsting of which Jesus spoke, was for a purer righteousness for the race; and it was only as he answered to this desire and was the impersonation of the righteousness which was craved for the society, for the race, that he was to be considered the Messiah.

“ In that age, the morality of the Jews had become very low. Though it may be admitted that it surpassed that of other nations, and in its theory very far surpassed it, yet, even *in its theory* it was not adequate to the spiritual necessities felt in that higher state of civilization which had come about, and still less was the common interpretation it received adequate to the wants of any soul. Its maxim was an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. Its highest flight was to do no wrong to another. And all that the law prescribed might be done without spirituality, nay, even all that it purposed; unless we look upon it in that spiritual light which they did not understand, and the understanding of which was not necessarily brought about by the practice of it. For the righteousness it prescribed was outward, not inward,—it consisted in rites and ceremonies that could be performed without the heart. A man might offer up the paschal lamb with murderous thoughts in his heart, might bring up his

peace-offering with a hand red with crime. It is this which St. Paul expresses, when he says, 'By the deeds of the law no man shall be justified before God.' The reason they could not be justified or be held as just is, that by them merely they could not be proved just; they could not make a man just. A man might do them and be unjust. And far less satisfactory was the practical morality to him who hungered for righteousness, for this must be always in any community far below the theoretical,—because our power of execution is always below that of conception. There is no person who has apprehended at all the good, the beautiful, and the true, who does not feel that what he realizes is infinitely below his ideal.

“ How easily then can we suppose that in the age of Jesus, there were men who sighed to have a purer righteousness introduced, who would perhaps meet together in groups and speak of the wants of the world, who would feel and mourn over the degradation of all individuals, the injustice that reigned in high places, the oppression of the multitude, and all the evils around and within them, and who would speak of some one to come who might bring back all things to the theory of the law; and go beyond it, even to the ideal within them; or perhaps we may still more naturally suppose that there were solitary individuals who felt this, and mused on it in their private retreats, in the very secret places of their soul, with that yearning of spirit which those may best understand who have felt it themselves, who have had purposes of benevolence towards the community to which the community turned a deaf ear; who saw good that might be attained, who met only ridicule when expressing

their hope and purpose, or by those who felt more solitary still, in whose minds doubt has shaded even the companionship of God, and whose moral aspirations have wandered without sympathy on earth, and without resting place in heaven. It was to these solitary ones that Jesus spoke, and what must have been their feelings to hear—'Blessed are ye who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for ye shall be filled!' Those can answer to whom allusion has just been made, and such there always are. In this age there are not a few who look with sorrow and almost impatience on the want of spirituality in the times, who feel that the pure morality of Christianity does not at all pervade the community.

"Here he spoke of the want of spiritual and religious life in our commercial, trading, working, and even professional classes,—how property, standing, office, reputation, enlisted the feelings and determined the tone of society,—how little was sought the self-sacrificing spirit of humanity that characterized Jesus, either by individuals, or the community as such. He diverged from this to its cause, and said it was the want of faith in man; that most fatal of all infidelities, more fatal than scepticism in the Bible, or even in God. For atheism was never anything but a transient state of mind,—no human mind could rest in it unless it was sunk in the grave of the body. It involved a suffering which the human heart could not long endure. While want of faith in man hardened the soul into selfishness, and made it inefficient for any good, and did not immediately stimulate a reaction.

"To those who felt this state of things, the want of faith in the community as to the moral capacities and

powers of man, these words might come, as they did to those of old, 'Happy are ye who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for ye *shall be filled*.' I am come, said Jesus, to tell you of a Father, and to convince you that you are sons ; to show you what a life of faith and self-sacrifice can be lived ; to show you how you can love and how you can bear ; to speak to the lowest of the community with the same brotherhood as to the highest.

"From this point Mr. Brownson went on with an eloquence, whose recollection in my mind I will not attempt to mar with my imperfect analysis, to speak of the certainty of the proposition that in Jesus was the perfection of human nature exhibited, which we are all called upon to have, and which we all could have. He declared that the doubt of being able to *live* Christ was the fatal scepticism of our times, that people smiled on you as a mad enthusiast when you proposed it as the point to which all the community were to be brought, and that this fatal infidelity prevented all progress, for it not only belonged to the vicious, but the respectable, not merely to the uneducated, but equally to those who occupied the shining places of literature and science, that it pervaded even the clergy in their pulpits.* And this want of faith in man, he continued to say, was the real denial of Christ. Those who did not believe that all men could unfold the highest excellence of Christ within themselves, were those alone who denied the Lord that bought them. For it was to establish this truth he lived and taught and died, and the Apostles after him. He then went on to speak of that spiritual principle within

* "Here came the passage which was misunderstood as meaning that the clergy were infidels. He only said that the want of *faith in man's becoming equal to Christ*, pervaded the *pulpits*, and is it not so ?"

us which had never been systematically unfolded, or even attempted to be unfolded, of the sympathy which was one element of it, and might be turned to such purposes of philanthropy, of the power of *willing* that would remove mountains of obstacles, even according to the words of Christ. The whole of this exhortation was perfectly thrilling, and with this he closed."

That a sermon like the one reported would be regarded as wanting true Christian faith, by the members of some denominations, is not to be denied ; but judged by the standard of the great Unitarian preachers of this day, it would be distinguished rather by its Christianity than by its infidelity.

Soon after coming to Chelsea Brownson sent to the publishers, James Munroe & Co., the manuscript copy of a duodecimo volume entitled, "New Views of Christianity, Society and the Church," * in which he labors at the solution of the great problem which had long occupied his mind and was to continue to occupy it for many years yet to come. How to reconcile opposites, natural and supernatural, earth and heaven, matter and spirit, time and eternity, Protestantism and Catholicity, man and God. The solution he offers in his "New Views," since he could find no bond of dialectic harmony by which they could be reconciled, was to confound them together, and recognizing no God but the divine in human nature, make a heaven upon earth, and labor for the eternal progress of man's material and spiritual nature. Unsatisfactory as is the solution, the book contains nevertheless many just and beautiful reflections, as well as passages of rare eloquence.

* Brownson's Works, vol. iv, p. 1.

In the Summer of 1837, he availed himself of Dr. W. H. Channing's proposal to exchange pulpits conveyed in the following letter :

“ NEW YORK, June 5th, 1837.

“ REV. MR. BROWNSON.

“ My dear sir,—I have been desirous of engaging the services of some gentleman from the East to preach for one Lord's day at the room where we now hold meetings for public worship.

“ Mr. Ellis told me that he believed you had some desire to come to New York. If this should be the case, it would be a great favor to me if you could find it convenient and agreeable to preach.

“ I am so situated, however, that I could offer no remuneration, and could only propose therefore to exchange with you, and I do not know whether this would meet your wishes. Our collection of hearers is very small, fifty being the greatest number who have ever met there, but you would help on the cause of truth perhaps although your hearers were so few.

“ If it agree with your plans and wishes to come, it would be most agreeable to me, for I wish to visit Boston. I should like to be absent the Sunday after next, though if you could come, and would prefer to be here *next Sunday*, I should still be happy to have your assistance. In this case, will you have the kindness to write as soon as convenient, as I have some previous arrangements to make before coming to Boston.

“ With great regard, your obedient servant,

“ W. H. C.”

Among the congregation that listened to Brownson on this visit to New York were three brothers, John, George, and Isaac Hecker, his acquaintance with whom, then begun, soon ripened into a lasting friendship for the rest of their lives.

Brownson many times exchanged pulpits with his Boston friends. The first time he preached in Dr. W. E. Channing's church he stated that it was the simple and natural faith of Unitarians as he found it in Dr. Channing's discourses which had redeemed him from infidelity. He dined that day with Channing, and although he considered himself a very small eater, Channing's table was so much like a hermit's that, before preaching his afternoon sermon, Brownson went to a hotel and ordered himself a dinner.

The greatest astonishment was expressed when he was invited to preach in Park Street Church, the head and centre of orthodox exclusiveness in Boston. He was the only Unitarian that had ever preached a sermon there.

CHAPTER X.

THE BOSTON REFORMER.—PRO-SLAVERY MOB.—POLITICAL DEMOCRACY.

JULY 1, 1836, Brownson made his best bow to the public as editor of the Boston Reformer, disclaiming all blame for the errors and all praise for the merits of its past career. The Reformer was originally intended to be a medium of free discussion on all topics connected with religion, morality, literature, and politics, regardless of party interests or sectarian prejudices, and of advocating the rights and interests of the industrious classes, so far, at least, as they were the common rights and interests of humanity. It was opposed to all privileged orders, and of course, could not seek to make a privileged order of the workingmen; it asked no favors for the workingmen; it demanded only justice to them and to all men.

On assuming the editorial chair he made this address to its readers:

“I appeal with some assurance to the workingmen. I have not now for the first time to introduce myself to their notice. It is now nearly seven years, since I appeared publicly the advocate of their cause, and though for some time I have been engaged in the discharge of duties which have had no special reference to that cause, more than one of the periodicals of the day, as well as no little reproach I have brought upon myself, can bear witness that I have never ceased to regard it with interest, and to promote it according to the measure of my ability.

“Seven years, however, have not passed over my head without producing some important modifications of my former views. I bring to the cause to which this paper is devoted, the same enthusiasm, the same love of humanity, the same confidence in man's power of progress, which I brought as editor to the Herald of Reform, a paper which I conducted in another part of our common country; but I hope I bring more enlarged views, a truer moral and political philosophy, and a zeal tempered with more discretion. I hope I understand better the nature of the reforms needed and the means by which they are to be effected.

“When I first connected myself with the cause which the workingmen profess to have at heart, I had no confidence in religion, and concerned myself with it, but to oppose it; now I embrace it as the lever of reform, as the very soul of progress. Then I regarded man as passive in the hands of external circumstances; I now recognize in him an active principle by which to a certain extent he may rise superior to circumstance. I then looked on the outward for reform; I now, without undervaluing the outward, look mainly to the inward. Then I was indignant at the past, and wished to destroy all memory of it; I wished to destroy all existing society and to create a new society modelled after certain notions of social perfection of which I then dreamed. But now I absolve the past, see much in the present to approve, and have no wish to destroy, but to perfect what is already begun. I would not, if I could, blot out the past. I love it too much. I prize too highly what it has done, the discoveries it has made, the examples of saintly and heroic virtue it has furnished to quicken our hearts and

urge us on to deeds of true glory. All that I ask is that the past be suffered to remain the past, and that we do not waste our energies in useless efforts to make it the present or the future."

"These are important changes of opinion, and in a logical mind must lead to results widely different from those I then contemplated. I was then truly a revolutionist, in principle, and in spirit. I am now much more of a conservative. The age of revolutions has passed by. We live in an epoch, at least in a country, of orderly, legalized progress." "Here is no settled order to break up, no privileged class to break down, no change in the fundamental laws to be effected. Here the government, so far as its theory is concerned, is established in the interests of the many; and whatever evils respecting it we may have to point out, they are evils of legislation or of the administration of the laws." "Here the conservative and the radical should be combined in the same individual. The ruling idea of the conservative is order, that of the radical is progress. The conservative opposes the radical because he thinks the radical would break up all order, introduce confusion and anarchy; the radical opposes the conservative because he believes the conservative is opposed to all progress, and determined to perpetuate all existing abuses. Both may unite and be fellow laborers for humanity, the very moment that the means of obtaining progress without interrupting order, and of preserving order without preventing progress, is discovered. This is the great problem which it seems to me our government has solved. In our republican constitutions a provision for amendments is inserted; the voice of the people quietly and constitutionally expressed, can make or

unmake such laws as seemeth to the people meet and proper. There is, then, here no need of conservatives and radicals. Both terms should be abolished. They make enemies of those who would be friends. We want men, human beings, devoted to the good of humanity, and nothing more.

"I am then, it may be seen, neither conservative nor radical, but a combination of both, and The Reformer will labor to unite the two parties, or rather, to melt both into one great party of humanity. In this sense I adopt the motto of The Reformer, 'No party but mankind.'"

Brownson in writing these words must have had some intention of keeping in a true and safe course between the two extreme parties now fiercely arrayed against one another, and counting in their ranks almost every individual of the human species. He perceived that there was a true and a false element on either side. The ultra conservatives, living in the past rather than in the present, or seeing the present only through the medium of other ages, naturally regard all innovation as dangerous, and cannot understand that what is living and perfectly intelligible to them can be a dead letter and perfectly unintelligible to others. Their influence, if sometimes embarrassing, is yet not without its service. It guards the truth itself against rash speculation, and maintains the form of sound words without which sound doctrine would itself soon be lost. It forces the men of the present and the future to observe the law of continuity, without which there is and can be no progress either of the individual or of society. It is no part of wisdom or of justice for those who speak the language of the present to denounce the conservatives as obscurantists, as the

enemies of light, or as hostile to the development and progress of intelligence. The wiser and better course is to endeavor to understand and translate them. It must not be forgotten that the sun shone as brightly and gave as much light yesterday as it does to-day.

Unhappily, of the two classes, neither understands or speaks to the understanding of the other. Hence in every age and nation in which there is anything like mental life there are always more or less distinctively formed two parties which may be denominated the one the party of the past and the other the party of the future, or the one conservative and the other progressive. The conservative would retain what has been, the progressive party would realize a good which it believes to be possible, but which has never yet actually obtained. In general the conservative in order to preserve the good which has been secured resists all departure from old, consecrated, and familiar forms, as a departure from truth; and the progressive in order to secure the ideal good on which he sets his affections rejects the old and familiar, denounces the past, and imagines that his success depends on cutting entirely loose from it as a base, and trusting to the resources of the new and unexplored world upon which he enters, to sustain him and his forces. These two parties divide every community in christendom, and keep up in the bosom of every community a sort of civil or internal war. Sometimes one party gains a partial victory, sometimes the other.

Each of these parties in what it affirms is good, and is evil only in what it denies. In its exclusiveness each breaks the continuity of the life of the race, the one by severing it from the future, the other by severing it from

the past. Neither understands that man's life is one and includes the past and the future. The quarrel would end if each would accept what each affirms, and each lay aside its own exclusiveness. The germ of the future is always in the past, and the future is only its development or maturity. Without the past there can be no future, and without the future life becomes death, and the past is as if it had not been. If both parties could understand that progress is in continuity, and that the future does only continue and complete the past, they would both see that the war is wholly uncalled for. The conservative would see that by progress he would lose nothing he wishes to preserve, and the progressive would see that without the principles the conservative holds fast there can be no progress. Progress is simply fulfilment, and conservatism without progress remains always inchoate, and progress without conservatism is impossible, for there can be no fulfilment where there is nothing to fulfil.

Unhappily, this age seeks progress by way of destruction, and therefore recedes instead of advancing. It has little to count except its losses. The party of progress is everywhere a revolutionary party, alike in government and society, in science and religion. It attacks everything, holds nothing sacred, sees evil in everything inherited from the past, and strives to recast man and society, religion and politics in a brand new mould. It will have nothing fixed and permanent, and demands that truth, that principles should be not immutable, but variable according to the variations of time and space. Since the world refuses to conform to the law of God, it requires the law of God to be amended

so as to conform to the world. Its destructive theory being put forth in the name of progress, and being almost universally held, it becomes impossible to advocate real progress without seeming to the public to war against those very things without which progress is impossible. Sensible men are obliged to defend with all their energy the conservative principle; and make war to the death on the party of progress. This is a bad state of things, in which to save anything good we are obliged to side with those who are exclusively conservative, and forego the effort to make that progress which is both practicable and needed. The exclusiveness of the party of progress forces us in our action to adopt the exclusiveness of the party of conservatism.

The consequence is that each party attacks or defends more than is necessary to its own purpose, and the age instead of advancing recedes, retrogrades towards barbarism. The conservative party loses its life and vigor, and becomes a stationary party, while the party of progress, without support in the past, without fixed and permanent principles, can be only the party of destruction. In this state of things minds are obscured, characters are enfeebled, and there is no longer the ability to comprehend the great problems of life or to understand the solutions which were intelligible and satisfactory to our forefathers. The age mocks at mediæval philosophy and theology, for they are too deep and too broad for its understanding. It has lost unity and catholicity of truth, and therefore of faith and intelligence. It has lost spirituality, and places its ideal in the material. It is therefore unable either to advance in the development and application of the truth that is eternal, the principles

that are immutable, or to retain the good worked out by the generations before us. We lose both the past and the future.

It is this state of things that the servants of God and the friends of man now are required to meet. They are called upon to present the solutions of the great problems of life, religious and social, to men whose minds are darkened, and whose characters are enfeebled ; not indeed new solutions, as I have said, but the old solutions in a form intelligible to them as they are, not simply as they were in the more masculine ages that have passed away.

There is undoubtedly a reaction commenced against the destructive tendencies of the age. Men are beginning to be alarmed at the results to which they point, and are recoiling from the abyss that opens before them. They begin to suspect that the changes which they have called progress bring not with them unmixed good, and are turning back to the investigation and comprehension of the past. The deeper thinkers of the age have already discovered that nothing is to be accounted progress that does not continue, develop, and complete the past. Yet they are not generally heeded, and the dominant tendency is still with the destructives. It is still necessary to guard against the revolutionary party, and to show the point of union between conservatism and progress. Individuals, indeed, perceive that the two are compatible with each other, but the sciolists, the half learned, and the great mass of the active spirits of the day regard them as mutually hostile and imagine that the one can have place only by annihilating the other.

"The Reformer" had been a political paper supporting the party then in power in the general government; the new editor declined to array himself with any political party, though still continuing to make it, in some respects, a political paper. It was neither partisan nor neutral; it freely discussed first principles in politics as in morals and religion, and all views and measures which the editor deemed worthy of notice; but he held himself free to advocate or combat any political measure according as he judged it beneficial or pernicious.

He was not a democrat, in the sense in which the term was used in Jefferson's time, nor in the sense of demogogy, as it was used by the party then calling itself democratic; but in the sense that all men have equal civil rights, that government and all its acts should contemplate the good of the whole, and that the people are the only rightful depositories of political power.

He was disposed to ask very little of government; in fact, wanted as little government as possible; but when government did speak he would have its voice imperative. Laws that were bad, unequal, oppressive, should never be disobeyed; they can be amended or repealed in a peaceable and constitutional manner. Defects in our legislation and legislators are chargeable to the people who are responsible for the acts of their representatives; the remedy for these defects must be sought in the enlightenment of the people. He was opposed to the factitious distinctions of society, and did not believe that political equality could long coexist in the same community with social inequality. By social equality he did not mean that all the members of the community should be of the same size, of the same height, nor equal

in wealth. Some might be greater, better, richer than others for aught he cared. All he asked was that no one in consequence of causes he could not control should necessarily be doomed to the lowest round in the social scale. He wanted all men's feet to stand on a level; the heads of some might be above those of others, that is nothing,—only do not let one man's feet stand on another man's head.

To effect this, he desired no legislation, nor an equalization of property, but only the circulation of just notions of the nature of true worth, and ampler means for the moral and intellectual elevation of the laboring classes. All he wanted of government was to remove the obstacles which government itself has placed in the way, and he believed the result of education and the diffusion of knowledge would be that not only every laborer should have enough to eat and drink, and wherewithal to clothe himself but ample opportunity to enjoy all intellectual and moral pleasures, and be behind none in literary and social refinement.

He endeavored to keep the workingmen from joining the political party called the workingmen's party, and exhorted them to exert themselves to *ascertain* what is right, and *be* what is just, and then they would have a weight that would poise all parties in the direction of the many and leave the advocates of the few "to kick the beam." All the workingmen would gain by a new political party would be the privilege of having their veins sucked by a new and more hungry swarm of demagogues.

The workingmen were demanding that ten hours should constitute a day's labor, and attempted by forcible

means to prevent any one from working more. Brownson warned them that if they meant to raise themselves they must be sure to have justice on their side; that every man who sells his labor has a perfect right to say how many hours he will labor in a day, but if he refuse to work the number of hours which custom, in the establishment in which he is employed, calls a day, he must make it a matter of express stipulation when he makes his engagement. Furthermore, a man's right in this respect extends only to himself; he has no right to interfere with another.

Some of the old friends of the Reformer complained that the paper now had too much religion. This, the editor said, was a singular and unexpected complaint, since it had been the custom for many years to call him an infidel. He had questioned no religious creed, and brought forward none of his own, and had meddled with none of the dogmas of religion, in the columns of his paper. It was true that most of its articles breathed a moral and religious tone, and should continue to do so as long as he had control of the paper, and he was ambitious to gain the approbation of those only who were the friends of religion and morality. There were journals enough to chronicle the daily vices and scandals of the town; but he wished to be able to conduct a paper which a judicious parent need not fear to put into the hands of his children.

The fact was, he was laboring to enlist the church on the side of the people. He would *democratize* the church, and convert it into a vast party for reform. "In marrying herself to absolutism," he wrote, "she espoused a mortal, and hence the cause of all her troubles. We

that church has a natural union, from which has
 sprung many a man of talents and wed her to liberal-
 ism. If she will listen to our
 advice and immediately separate herself from abso-
 lutism and connect herself with liberalism, humanity, we
 promise her a long life and a happy one; but, if she will
 not, we bid her get ready her weeds, for the day
 of her reckoning approaches the time of her utter
 ruin. The doom of absolutism is pro-
 nounced. The friends of the race are insecure on their
 feet. The friends of abuses stand aghast,
 and the friends of the church are out in the tempest, bare-
 headed, clinging with desperation to the last remnant of
 the old and clinging to the first rude shelter that offers.
 The friends of liberalism and he who links his
 name with the church is lost. Reform is the order
 of the day. The people will not long sustain a body
 that is so inimical to their rights, and
 the church must reform and the correction of abuses.
 The policy of the clergy to unite with the
 reform. The reform are going ahead, and they will not
 stop. The dignitaries of the church cry
 out to the people to stop. He who would com-
 e to the front, not stand in the
 rear. The reform are going ahead and ahead they will
 go. The clergy choose: without them,
 the reform will go on behind.
 The church must unite with the Reform
 Party. The church must be by their presence, and warm
 in their cause. The Reform Party will
 be the great harm will come from its
 exclusion. The church needs the learning, the piety, the

benevolence the clergy might inspire, in a word, the warning, guiding, restraining influence of religion."

"We would not destroy the church, but save it; we would not lessen the influence of the clergy, but save it, and *salvation for either can come now only from a hearty coöperation with the people to meliorate their condition.*"*

The Boston Pilot, the Catholic paper in Boston, in its issue of July 2nd, exhorted Brownson to study the character and doctrines of the Catholic church, and was confident he would find in that church all that he was hopelessly striving for outside of it. His reply shows what was then his estimate of Catholicity, which he judged only from so much of its practice as had come under his personal observation. He said he had always treated the Catholic church with respect, and given it credit for the good it had done; that he shared in none of the common Protestant hostility to it, but the mission of the Catholic church was ended. Christendom had outgrown its childhood, and was not now to be commanded, but convinced. "It asks not now to be treated as a child whose duty is merely to obey, but as a man who is capable of reasoning and of understanding the nature of things."

On the 3rd of August, the Anti-Slavery Society of Boston attempted to celebrate the anniversary of the emancipation of slaves in the British West India Islands; but a mob—if such term may be applied to the very respectable southern gentlemen and Boston merchants who are here referred to—collected about the building where the society was to assemble, and the entrance to the hall was closed by the lessee of the building. No

* Boston Reformer, Thursday, July 21, 1836.

violence was offered, for the society quietly retired to a private house, where after some conversation, Brownson, who was to have delivered the oration in the hall, offered a prayer, a hymn was sung, and the society dispersed.

It was a well-known fact that when slavery was abolished in Massachusetts, the slave-trade was carried on with no great profit by Boston merchants. Slavery was not profitable in Massachusetts after the establishment of American Independence—the immigration of poor foreigners who worked harder than negroes for just about the same pittance, that is, food and clothing, and lodging, and who could be discharged without any further consideration of their means of subsistence when old, sick, or not wanted any longer, had suggested to the thrifty sons of the Pilgrims that they might do better by transporting their cargoes of human flesh to Carolina or Georgia. The South was rich in negroes; in fact, just before our civil war, it was a very poor negro whose market value was not a thousand dollars; some were valued higher; but bank notes and specie coin were not so abundant there as in the northern towns. It was believed by many persons who lived in Boston, that the Boston negro importers were in the habit of taking *chattel* mortgages on the negroes they imported, from their southern customers. This led in part to the great connection in business between Boston and the South, but which was pretty much severed by the introduction of what was called the “Maine Liquor Law” in Massachusetts about 1853.

Until now, Brownson, opposed as he was, on principle, to human slavery, and still refusing to take any

measures for its abolition in the states which countenanced it, and where it was their own affair, not that of the states which had enacted statutes of emancipation, had said little or nothing on the question. But the opposition offered to the delivery of an oration,—which would not have been, and the mob had every reason to presume would not have been violent or incendiary, inasmuch as the orator had never proposed or defended the abolition of slavery in the states where the laws permitted it, and inasmuch also as there was no motive or occasion just then for rousing the anti-slavery men to riot,—was resented in the “Reformer” of the next day in an article by the editor, in the course of which he said :

“After the *gentlemanly* mob of last October, we had supposed our city had become sick of mobs, and we believe it has. We cannot persuade ourselves that the mob of yesterday was countenanced by any great number of our own citizens. We believe Bostonians to be too enlightened, too much attached to law and order, to countenance such proceedings more than once in their lives. What was done yesterday we attribute to the instigation and influence of southerners, and if any Bostonians of respectability joined, it was those who are most deeply interested in southern markets; those who, perhaps, fear that any efforts here to benefit the slave will result in injury to their pecuniary interests. Besides, we suppose there are among us not a few who hold mortgages on slaves, and into whose hands slaves have fallen to pay debts due from their owners. We should like to know how many of those who have no sympathy for the slave, but a vast deal for the slave-holder, are in fact, though living in a free state; slave-holders themselves.

"But let this pass. These mobs come too late in the day. They are a species of argument that will not convince. If the Anti-slavery folks are wrong, they will hardly be mobbed into the right. Opposition unites them together and carries them forward. Nothing will make one more attached to a cause than to suffer in its behalf. To abandon a cause for which we have suffered, for which we have been persecuted, is impossible. And the Anti-slavery folks are now persecuted, and so persecuted, that we may be assured that they will never abandon this work in which they are engaged.

"This is not all. There are men in the community who cannot look tamely on, and see their fellow citizens, their brothers and sisters persecuted for advocating the cause of humanity. We are too near Faneuil Hall patiently to see men and women mobbed, because they would assemble peaceably to rejoice that a portion of our fellow beings have been set free. We are too near the cradle of Liberty to bear it charged on some of the best christians of the city that they are incendiaries, because they cannot believe it consistent with the rights of man, or with christian love that slavery should exist. Mobs call these men out and compel them to speak.

"When peaceable women cannot assemble to hear from a respectable clergyman of the city an address in commemoration of the emancipation of slaves in the British West India Islands without being mobbed, we deem it time to speak, and to speak out in a tone that cannot be mistaken. It is no longer a question whether the abolitionists have been judicious, and always just. They are persecuted; they are wronged; their rights are

denied them ; and every man who has sympathies, who apprehends humanity, will be on their side. These mobs are leaving us no chance of escape. We must either abandon all pretence to a love of freedom for even ourselves, and come out the decided advocates of slavery, or we must speak out in behalf of the abolitionists. These mobs will not suffer us to be neutral, they compel us to take sides. And can a New England man, can a Bostonian, hesitate which side to take ? Is there a man among us to advocate slavery ? If there be, we call upon him to speak, so that we may know him. And we say to all those who are the friends of human rights, of their country, and of religion, also to speak ; now is the time.

“For ourselves, we have hitherto said very little on this subject. We have never been able to go with the abolitionists ; we have never approved their modes of proceeding ; but we have now no liberty left us. As the conductor of a public journal expressly devoted to the melioration of humanity, and owning no party but mankind, we cannot be silent. We must speak, and however much the abolitionists may have been in the wrong, their cause *now* becomes the cause of every freeman, every patriot, every philanthropist, and every christian. It is a fearful crisis, and wo to the coward spirit that would shrink from it ! It must be met, and manfully, and it SHALL BE. If southerners can come here and mob peaceable women, they *shall* be made to know that there is here too much of the spirit of the Pilgrims to bear it in silence. If they can come here in open daylight, and instigate, and in part form a mob, we tell them now, that from this time henceforth and forever, that we espouse

the cause of the slave, and that we will not cease to importune his owner till he is free. We have here at the North suffered enough from Southern dictation. It is enough that the South bullies the North in Congress, she must beware how she attempts it in this city."

George Bancroft, then residing at Springfield in the western part of Massachusetts, made an address to the Democracy of that and the neighboring towns on the Fourth of July, 1836, which was printed and circulated, and copies sent to the newspapers for critical notice.

Brownson's remarks on it in the Reformer were highly complimentary to the orator, whom he praised for his eloquence, his philanthropy, and his political philosophy. Their views of democracy, not in the partisan sense, but as indicating a popular form and spirit of government, were very similar. Bancroft was a democrat in both senses; Brownson only in the latter sense; though for much of his life he supported the party known as the Democratic. In 1824, the first year he was old enough to vote, he was in the Territory of Michigan, and, of course, could cast no vote in the election of president; but his sympathies during the contest were with Mr. Calhoun, until he learned that he would not be a candidate for the office of president, but that of vice-president; then he was for Mr. Crawford. He paid little or no more attention to politics till 1828, when he voted for electors in favor of the reelection of Mr. Adams. The year following and through 1830, he helped to get up and sustain the workingmen's party, but by moral and social views rather than political. Resuming his occupation of a clergyman at the end of 1830, he had not since mingled in politics, believing that the cause of the workingmen, which he

had most at heart, would be injured rather than benefitted by attaching it to either of the great parties of the country. In his childhood and youth he had been associated chiefly with those who held the doctrines of the party which later was named democratic, and though he did not now uphold all those doctrines, he looked for good results from that party far more than from its political opponents.

Bancroft was an avowed partisan and one of the leaders of the Democratic party in Massachusetts. He took occasion of Brownson's remarks on his Fourth of July Address, to write him a letter, which is here inserted and in which he may have had an eye to bringing Brownson and his journal to the support of the Democratic party.

“ SPRINGFIELD, September 21, 1836.

“ My Dear sir,—Having failed to meet you the other day when I was in Boston, I cannot forbear writing you a line to say how I feel indebted to you for the kind and firm support your criticism of my oration gave me. The views there contained I have defended on various public occasions during the last ten years. Little did I think the publication of them would have been followed by such bitter and long continued assaults. But these attacks do not annoy me:—a clear conviction I dare avow ; and were I left alone, I would scorn to conceal my thoughts from fear.

“ With your newspaper which I often see, I am much charmed. On the principle of the advance of humanity Mr. Van Buren is sincerely with us. That and that only is the cause of the intense bitterness of the

Whigs. The part which he has to perform is of highest importance. The country is Democratic ; the people need a higher conviction, a clearer consciousness of its democracy. It is during Mr. V. B.'s administration, that that work will go on. The government cannot be improved except by the advance and improvement of the people.

"If you come upon Connecticut River, pray let me see you. The Democracy in Franklin and in Hampshire is entirely on the highest and purest system. You would like very much my friends S. C. Allen, and Sylvester Judd, and Chauncey Clarke, and others who have the true instinct about them. In this country the tendency is steady towards a firm and vigorous system of truly popular doctrines. The people want light. The instinct is right ; they want consciousness. 'Know thyself,' said Solon to Athens as a commonwealth,—our commonwealth wants the consciousness of being an organic whole, and of feeling the corresponding obligation to make progress, as a state,

"Yours very truly,

"GEORGE BANCROFT.

"P. S.—About a year ago I subscribed for the Reformer ; and directed it to be sent to the Hampden Whig. When the year is out, please send it to *me* instead of sending it to the whig. When next in Boston, I will call at your office and adjust the balance.

"Have you Vico ? I doubt not, you have ; so too Jouffroy's pleasant though not very forcible volume. His tract on Human Destiny is excellent. The saloons are closed against the great truths which mark the age ; it is

now for the yeomanry and the mechanics to march at the head of civilization. The merchants and the lawyers, that is, the monied interest broke up feudalism. The day for the multitude has now dawned.

“REV. O. A. BROWNSON,

“*Editor of Boston Reformer, Boston.*”

At the same time the address to the Massachusetts Democrats, written by Abel Cushing, was sent out by the Democratic Committee, in referring to which Brownson announced in his journal his political position. He said he had never assumed the position of a neutral, but reserved to himself the right to give his opinions on any subject which he deemed worth expressing his opinion upon. It was not the object of *The Reformer* to support any party, or to aid in elevating either to power, but he could freely discuss the respective merits of the candidates and of the measures advocated.

Van Buren he looked upon as a man of high order of talents, yet not of the highest; and in his private life he believed him irreproachable, and that he would make a very respectable president. As Webster was virtually not a candidate, he thought Van Buren the best fitted to be president of any of the candidates then before the public. Yet Van Buren did not meet his wishes; he was not a democrat, in his sense, nor a statesman; but only an able politician. He seemed to think more of ascertaining the will of the people, hearing to it, and profiting by it, than of creating a right will in the people. “In presenting this view of Van Buren we are censuring not him, so much as we are his party. That party is the Democratic party, and comprises in fact the great body,

and the most advanced party, of the American people. We are a humble member of that party, so far as we are a member of any party, and were we called upon to act politically, we should act with it. But we are not satisfied with it. It has as yet advanced only to the sovereignty of the people. Van Buren, and all politicians who are popular with the party, we may say with the people, merely ask what is the will of the people, and when they ascertain it, they prepare themselves to conform to it. We go a step further, and ask, Is that will right? Is it just? If it be not, we will not conform to it; we will oppose it, on the one hand, and on the other, do our best to set it right. Were we in office, however, we should feel ourselves bound to obey it or not to act at all, that is, where the will was clearly and formally expressed by the people themselves, in the same manner in which we were elected. Left to our own discretion, we should act in reference not to their will, but to our own convictions of right.

“ This is our democracy. We admit the sovereignty of the people when the question is of many or few; we deny it when we speak absolutely. The people are not sovereign. There is no sovereign, but the Infallible, that is, God, that is again, the Right, the Just. We dissent from the democratic party, therefore, and of course from the popular doctrine of the day, by denying the infallibility of the people, and the absolute sovereignty of their will. We make justice paramount to the popular will, and acknowledge allegiance to the popular will only so far as it is in harmony with our convictions of the Just. The popular doctrine, and of course Van Buren's, we take it, is somewhat short of this.

“We do not, in thus dissenting from the popular doctrine and the people’s candidate, throw ourselves into the arms of White, or Harrison, neither of whom can be president, or is fit to be. Judge White in many respects is a deserving man, but his political doctrines are the same as those of Mr. Van Buren, and therefore equally objectionable. Besides, he is a slave-holder and as times are we will support no slave-holder for the office of president. As it regards General Harrison, we cannot without pain think of him in connexion with the presidency. We know of no claim which he has to that office. In politics we suppose he agrees with Mr. Webster, and Mr. Webster should then be supported. Mr. Webster has taken his ground manfully, he is the champion of the Whig cause, and the Whigs cannot expose their cause more effectually to ridicule than by deserting him and supporting such a man as General Harrison. We differ from Mr. Webster very widely; but we can respect him, and should feel somewhat proud to see a party with which we have but a few things in common gathering round him; and we sincerely respect the Whigs in this state for adhering to him. They do as men ought to do. They lose our respect by suffering him to be withdrawn.”

Van Buren was elected just about the same time that Brownson severed his connection with the Reformer, for a short time. In the beginning of the summer following, the proprietors of that journal having prevailed on him to resume charge of it, and he having reluctantly consented, Bancroft wrote again :

"SPRINGFIELD, July 9, 1837.

"O. A. BROWNSON,

"Dear Sir:—I received my Reformer on Friday night with unusual satisfaction. I was glad to see you again in the field as the champion of the rights of Humanity. I must give Mr. Wood credit, (and if he would in the least value my opinion, I wish you would tell him so) for having conducted the newspaper with singular correctness of feeling, uniformity of principle as applied to subjects the most various, and consistency with himself.

"But I am very glad you have returned to the work, because you are, (what so few are) rooted and grounded in the true doctrine. You have the central point, from which truth, as applied to our political relations, must radiate; the seminal principle, that has vitality, springs up, and bears an abundant harvest. It is the misfortune of many of our very estimable men, that they have reflected but little; that they have not set their minds in order; that they advocate measures blindly without knowing the true principle on which their right measures rest. Others again are blinded by present personal interests, and therefore weigh men and measures with false weights. I think your writings give abundant evidence of that deep philosophy which by the unerring standard of human consciousness, tries the merit of every measure and of the leading influence of every public man.

"Let us then act vigorously and unitedly, that we may act boldly and effectually. We have an immense field opened in Massachusetts, an enlightened and an

inquiring people; a people disciplined to moral dialectics by the early habit of analyzing the most profound questions in philosophy as veiled under the forms of theological controversy. We can achieve here a glorious victory; we can gain dominion for the highest idea of the beautiful and the just; we can give to our legislation a character of justice and philanthropy, such as no nation on earth ever attained.

“ But to do this we must act together. In the great controversy now dividing the country, you have avowed your purpose of sustaining the national administration; in this you have acted honestly and wisely; for, unless we who approve, sustain the administration firmly, it will be overborne by the noisy insolence of the city train bands; and the general government fall into the hands of the aristocracy of the country.

“ I am not blind to the faults of the party in power; I confess my confidence is increasing in Mr. Van Buren, and many of the men by whom he is surrounded; Mr. Butler for instance, and Mr. Gilpin. All three are, as I believe, heartily with us; and if they cannot advance every great truth we might desire, the fault lies not in the men but in the times.

“ Analyze the parties of the country. The aristocracy assuredly appears under three forms: 1. The aristocracy of powerful slaveholders, the new barons of Runnymede, as they style themselves, the representatives of feudalism, centuries after the mission of feudalism has been perfected. 2. The mercantile interest, angry at finding that wealth is no longer absolutely power, vexed that the laboring class in the advance of civilization is preparing to take the lead in the cause of humanity, is pushed by

an indomitable instinct to struggle for dominion, which by the mercy of God's providence it cannot gain, it has had its day; it has done its work; it has connected the whole globe; it ruled for a century and a half; it now in the laboring people finds a successful rival. Of this mercantile interest Alexander Hamilton was the master spirit in his day; Daniel Webster is the master spirit now. His appropriate reward is not the presidential chair, but a marble statue in State Street. 3. The third form of aristocracy is to be seen in our corporations, which, in this state, have perfected a system of centralization, and are laboring to finish the hierarchy by a general combination or a national bank. The proposition of a general convention of bankers to decide when specie payments are to be resumed is a most wanton insult on the community; as if an honest man ought not pay his debts forthwith, or as soon as he can, and not wait for his neighbors to be honest also. The proposition, received without public alarm, is an index of the extent to which this monstrous power has already usurped dominion over the interests of the country.

"Now these three parties agree in nothing but the love of money. The slave is his master's money; the merchants' god is money; the sole purpose of corporations is to make money. Thus the moneyed interest stands forth the united, powerful champion of aristocracy, of privilege, of the past.

"On the other hand is the people, slow to be aroused, slow to winnow truth, but holding truth in the firmest grasp, when once it has been appreciated by the common mind.

"Now analyze the democracy, south of the Potomac, it resists the barons of Runnymede, and yet yields too much to slavery. North of the Potomac, and south also, it is a little overawed by moneyed corporations. In the cities it is a little overawed by all three influences, by slavery, mercantile privileges, and corporations. What then?

"I demand of the democrats, quasi or real, in practical life, not that vehemence for reform, which would carry them beyond the public mind; but a careful, steady, continued progress with the public mind. As each new question arises, I demand of those whom I support, that the question which arises, shall be decided on the side of freedom. The happiest administration is that which respects the existing forms of society, yet at every opportunity strives for something better. It should claim for the state the same right of progress which belongs to the individual character and mind; it should claim for it freedom to develop its powers in harmony with its capacity for improvement.

"I have some charity, therefore, even for the occasional timidity of our public men. I regret the late measure of New York, Virginia, and Michigan; I claim that we in Massachusetts should aim at a more lofty tone of justice, and nearer approximation to equal rights; but to the national administration I give unfaltering support, because I am confident, that this administration will accomplish all the good in its power; and because its overthrow would instal slavery, corporations, and mercantile privilege in the chair of state.

"I am too familiar with your writings, not to know that our principles accord in many essential points; I

would fain hope we might view practical subjects alike also.

"Here is a very long letter, which I had no idea of writing when I sat down.

"I will before closing call your attention to the second volume of History which I am publishing. I want you to read it calmly and critically. Detect in it, if you can, an inconsistent line, and if you do, be sure you let me know it. I have analyzed Whiggism in its fathers Locke and Shaftesbury. I have shown what democracy is in the chapter on Quakers; and I have in the last chapter given our Calvinists a few hints, which not many of them will take. I think you will relish them. On our Unitarian clergy Miss Martineau is not a bit too severe.

"If you come into our region, pray give me a call; and I assure you I shall take the liberty of visiting you, if I am ever again in Boston.

"Yours very truly,

"GEO. BANCROFT.

"O. A. BROWNSON, Boston."

"Mem. I do not ask your critique on my history by way of begging commendation; but because I believe you will see the force of my statements when you come to read them. The chapter on Quakers will, unless you are familiar with old quaker books, surprise you. I want criticism; I have taken so much pains to be accurate, that I am willing and desire to have my book proved in the furnace,"

Though sympathising with the Democrats much more than with the Whigs, Brownson had a great dislike to party tyranny, a great aversion to being swallowed

up in a multitude that goes hither and thither, just as some irresponsible will directs; and was determined wherever he was, to speak according to his own convictions, and act as seemed to him good, holding himself free to accept truth and justice wherever he could find them. No party is always wrong, or always right, and he could not and would not surrender his own convictions for the sake of agreeing with any one of them,

In nearly every mind, then as now, the fundamental notion of popular government is that the people are sovereign. Now, this notion he could not entertain. Sovereignty is that which is highest, and implies the right to command what it pleases, and the right to command involves the corresponding duty of obedience. This would make the state, the people in their collective capacity, free indeed; but every individual man a slave, just as much as where the sovereignty is lodged in one man, or in a class of men. God alone is sovereign, and in the sovereignty of God is the only guaranty of individual freedom.

CHAPTER XI.

MANUAL-LABOR SCHOOLS.—POPULAR EDUCATION.

BROWNSON had for some two or three years expressed great confidence in manual-labor schools as the means of placing the best education within reach of the poorest. If he had any practical measure on which his heart was set, it was these schools which, by connecting labor with study, would make the student healthy and vigorous ; and by connecting study, literature, and refinement with manual labor would elevate labor to the rank of an honorable pursuit, not inconsistent with the highest social, as it was not with the highest political position. That they might be made nearly or quite self-supporting, he was convinced by his own judgment and the arguments of those with whom he talked on the subject.

Almost immediately after assuming the duties of editor of the Reformer, he made known in the journal his views in this regard ; but rather in a general and theoretical way, than in a particular and practical exposition of a detailed plan of carrying them out. A letter from Channing then in Newport, R. I., suggested a way of obtaining more information.

“ NEWPORT, July 19, 1836.

“ Dear sir,—My brother Tuckerman* visits Boston tomorrow, and though much occupied I cannot but write you a line. I learn that you meet much success in your

* Rev. Joseph Tuckerman, D. D., had been for more than twenty-five years the Unitarian pastor in Chelsea, laboring most assiduously among seamen.

Sunday services, that is, that you bring together a large and attentive audience. I doubt not that to those, who think innovation synonymous with evil, this enterprize will be viewed with jealousy, and they will comfort themselves with thinking, that its novelty is its great recommendation. Undoubtedly this has its full share in drawing hearers. It depends much on you whether these shall be *permanent* results. Perpetuity in such enterprizes depends chiefly on two causes,—first on the assertion of *great, everlasting* principles, founded in the reason and meeting man's enduring wants,—next on institutions, which embody ideas and give them the force of habit, by securing frequent repetitions. Wesley relied chiefly on the last,—you can make little or no use of the last. Mere institution does less and less as the world grows older. Your reliance must be on *great, unchangeable principles*. If you can fix these on men's minds, you will work for the future as well as the present, and even more. The great principle of human equality is what you insist on and is of infinite importance. But it requires a *spiritual* exposition to answer its end. Men can only learn it by looking into themselves; and the effect of thus learning it will be, not envy but contempt of the present artificial distinctions of society, and a pity for those, who in worshipping these distinctions, overlook all that is venerable in human nature.

“I have said you cannot avail yourself of *institutions* in the common sense of that word. It is too late for forms, hierarchies, etc. But the reduction of principles to *practice* does much to perpetuate their influence. I wish therefore that your people would begin to employ means seriously for their own elevation. I have seen but

one reference in your paper to *manual-labour schools*. They seem to me at present the only means of giving a *thorough* education to the mass of the people. Why may not a better education be given through these than the best now afforded to the rich? This leads me to a suggestion. Can you not break up the intelligent part of your congregation into little fraternities, to each of which some great subject may be committed? Let the manual-labour system be entrusted to the most intelligent. Let them gather all the facts—modes—processes—results. Your paper might be the vehicle for their articles—and in this way you would find co-adjutors in the work of editing. This work, I fear, may be too heavy for you. Do not wear yourself out. You are to benefit the working class, not by doing everything for them, but by stirring them up to do much for themselves. I want various establishments in our city for the spiritual advancement of the people—a gallery of the fine arts open to all classes—collections of natural history—extensive libraries. These must all come—and to excite a desire for them is one step.

“You see I have not forgotten your work. May God bless you. Suffer me to say that your success depends on nothing more than on *singleness of heart*. You must *love* your fellow-creatures unaffectedly, love them too much to leave any room for anger towards opponents, and for solicitude about reputation. You must be careful too lest in applying christianity to worldly and political affairs, you dim its purity, and forget that its celestial spirit is worth more than the world, and all

the schemes of politicians. I hope you may spell out my hasty, almost illegible writing.

“ Very truly your friend,

“ WM. E. CHANNING.

“ Rev. O. A. BROWNSON, Boston.”

Channing's plan of using the intelligent part of the congregation to gather facts in regard to manual-labor schools, suggested to Brownson the scheme of making that use rather of the readers of the Reformer, and he accordingly announced in its editorial columns that being in want of more information respecting such schools, he opened his columns to the communications of those of his friends who could enlighten him respecting the manual-labor schools already established in our country, the manner in which they were conducted, the general principles on which such schools should be established; also on the advantages or disadvantages of such schools as they existed or might exist. He was anxious to have a manual-labor school established that might serve as a model school for the whole community, and be a school also for teachers, for preparing men to take charge of manual-labor schools. He wished to bring this matter before the public, and saw no better way to do it than by opening his columns to all those who were able to give it a free and full discussion.

He also wrote to Governor Everett on the subject of these schools, feeling that his approbation would be given to any measure tending to elevate the masses and effect the progress of humanity. Although Everett was more patriotic than philanthropic, his orations have a rich

vein of philanthropic feeling running through them, and he must be recognized as a liberal-minded statesman and a friend of social and moral progress. Liberty with him was a right, not a grant, not a system of checks against tyranny, but the free exercise of inalienable rights. He belonged to literature, and he left his own fireside for a strange land and a foreign dialect, when he became a politician. Here is his answer :

“ CHARLESTOWN, MASS., 16th August, 1836.

“ Dear sir,—I have your favor of the 12th. I have no doubt that manual labor schools may be made the means of widely diffusing the advantages of education, and thus become a great blessing to the community.

“ Perhaps the name of ‘Industry Schools,’ by which institutions of this kind are known in Germany, would describe them better. It would indicate a wider scope of employment than is implied in the present name, at least as commonly understood.

“ Attempts have been made to apply the principle to institutions for professional education. There may be a doubt whether this can be done. I should fear that the ambitious student would exert himself, by unreasonable vigils, to make up what he would erroneously deem the loss of time spent in labor. Should this prove to be the case, his health, instead of being preserved, would suffer by the twofold call on the physical and intellectual powers. But I should be glad to learn that no such evil has shown itself, where the experiment has been tried.

“ I have no doubt that a system of general education might be devised, adapted to the wants, duties and vocation of the people, and providing within itself the means

for defraying a considerable portion of the current expenses. The occupations pursued for this purpose, being taken from all the departments, would, while they formed a source of income to the establishment, be themselves a valuable part of education for active life.

"I believe with Dr. Franklin, that, it would be a great advantage to every man, whatever his calling, to be well acquainted with tools, or the implements of some useful art. Sir Isaac Newton was skilful in this way. General Washington in his youth was a practical surveyor. Mr. Jefferson had an apartment in his house fitted up as a workshop. The late professor Peck of Cambridge, a person of great scientific attainments, was skilful in the use of the lathe, and the late Dr. Prince of Salem constructed his own philosophical instruments.

"You speak of the institutions in question in connection with the 'workingmen.' I can imagine schools on this principle, which would furnish a better education, than that which is now obtained at our best schools, and I should be sorry to give any countenance to the idea, that there are different classes of our youth, requiring different kinds of education.

"There would, as you observe, be some outlay required for fixtures. The people of this state have always recognized the principle, that it is the duty of the Public to provide for the education of the rising generation. The present mode of defraying the expenses of the schools operates tolerably well in the large towns, but leaves much to be desired, in the more thinly settled portions of the country. I am not without hopes, that a rapid accumulation of the school fund, with a distribution of its income on the principle adopted in the State of

New York, will furnish a remedy to the evils, existing in too many rural districts. At all events, I consider the duty of a public provision for education to be, to the full, as imperative as that of providing for the administration of justice or the military defence of the country.

“Considerations that will readily occur to you, incline me to excuse myself from attending the proposed public meeting, but I cheerfully submit this expression of my opinions on the subject, to your disposal.

“Respectfully,

“EDWARD EVERETT.

“REV. O. A. BROWNSON.”

One reason, and perhaps the principle one, why Brownson was in favor of manual-labor schools was because they would afford an opportunity for educating all the children of the community. This is an important consideration, and seems to justify more extended remarks here than the success which attended his efforts at the time might warrant; for it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that they may even yet be established.

No state is free, in the true sense of the word, where only a portion of its children are educated. Where only a few are educated, those few will be educated mostly for what are called the learned professions, and consequently, will be educated not with the idea that they are educated *for* the people, but to get their living *out* of the people.

The learned professions are necessary, and no war is intended on them. But it makes some difference

...

whether they be filled by men who enter them for the purpose of serving mankind, or for the purpose of serving themselves. Now, when a young man is acquiring an education, or deciding on his future profession, he seldom inquires how he can best serve his fellow creatures, but generally how he can best distinguish or enrich himself. This will always be the case if but the few are educated. State Colleges, Universities, therefore, into which only a small number of youths can enter will never do much to make a community free and equal. Their pupils see themselves superior in many respects to those around them, are engaged in different pursuits, have different tastes, and as they are supported by the labor of others, it is hardly possible that they should not deem themselves somewhat better. Men should not be educated expressly with a view to getting their living without labor. The learned professions should be filled only with those who have a natural taste for them and enter them as an honorable means of serving mankind. Even were it desirable, which it is not, all our sons cannot go to college, and our common schools do not even pretend to educate. A liberal education, as it is called and understood, only fits a man to live without labor, and if all were to receive this education there would be no others out of whom they could get their living. But manual labor schools would place the means of the best education within the reach of the poorest, and all the people trained and inured to labor would have the science and skill to labor successfully.

Another argument in favor of these schools is their tendency to elevate labor to the rank of a liberal profes

sion. Disgust at labor, desire to obtain the means of living without it, prompts nearly all the crimes against property committed in any civilized community. No man dreads labor merely on account of its requiring physical exertion. He avoids it simply on the ground of the ideas which he associates with it.

Finally, the ill health, perpetual diseases, and short lives of studious and professional men tell us plainly that something is in fault. There is a connection between health of body and mental and moral health. Everybody admits that there is a close connection between the body and the intellect, and to be just they should admit a connection equally close between the body and what is usually meant by the heart. The moralist can no more overlook the influence of the body on morals, than the physician can the influence of morals on the body in generating ill health. It is doubtless the recognition of this truth which has led the authorities of our colleges to countenance, if not encourage the athletic sports and contests which seem to be regarded as almost as important a branch of a liberal education as the scientific department. But besides the objection that violent and spasmodic effort is no substitute for regular and steady labor, it would hardly be considered rash to assert that the physical constitution of a young man is more often injured than benefitted by over-training and over-exertion. One great defect of our whole course of teaching from the kindergarten up, is, that too great pains are taken to make everything interesting and pleasant, and to eliminate all that savors of labor on the student's part. If the first books given to children were such as would require an effort on their part to understand them and

the same rule followed all through, the mind would be more exercised and thereby strengthened to think and judge. In this respect the times are growing worse, instead of better, and the notion that all study must be an amusement, not a labor, has extended so far that hardly any works except the very scientific are read unless written in the form of novels, and many an old lady who would be unable to keep awake during a sermon, will eagerly devour all those reported in her Monday morning paper.

The three divisions of education, the moral, the intellectual, and the physical, are but parts of one great scheme of education, that of the *whole* man. Neither part can be complete, or sufficient in its own sphere, without the others. No system of schools can be complete which does not make provision for them all.

In a review of M. Matter's work * in the Christian Examiner for May, 1836, Brownson discusses the question of education of the people at great length.

Matter set forth that manners, tastes, habits, customs and morals precede laws, determine their character, and give them their authority; and in return laws preserve manners, and give them force and influence. Sometimes, in the course of civilization, manners are in advance of laws, and sometimes the reverse is the fact; in either case the gain of one is the gain of both. The progress of law leads to a progress of morality, and the only proper legislation has always moral interests in view. The highest duty of government is, according to Matter, to guard and perfect morality. The first means he

* De l'Influence des Mœurs sur les Lois et des Lois sur les Mœurs, par M. Matter.

assigns to this end is to attach itself to the dominant sentiments, ideas, and tendency of a people, and direct all its laws to this end. The second means, he says, is the moral and political education of the people ; and the third is education of the young. As the first can never be successfully applied without the previous application of the other two, Brownson confines his discourse to the subject of the other two.

The first question that occurs is, who shall be the schoolmaster, to determine and impart the education?—and he thinks no constituted body, civil, political, or religious, should have charge of education, for they all have, or are prone to think they have, peculiar rights and interests, and these will invariably preside over the education they direct.

No government is qualified to determine the education to be given to the people. The wisdom of government can never rise above the average wisdom of those who compose it. Even if these individuals were,—and they are not,—the wisest and best men of the nation, it by no means follows that they are qualified to decide authoritatively what ideas and sentiments are proper for the people, or what instruction should be given to children. There are few who would not call in question their infallibility, and the expediency of giving up their understandings to theirs.

No education can be complete, be what it ought to be, that does not instruct both people and children in reference to the end for which man was made, and fit them to attain it. The destination of man and society, and the means of marching steadily towards it, are the subject matter of all useful education, and surely it will

not be pretended that, in relation to these, government is greatly in advance of the people. It may, as it is in duty bound, make all the provision it can for education, but must not attempt to decide what the education shall be.

The education of the people decides the character and measures of government, and determines the education of the young. If we of the present generation have incorrect notions of the destiny of man and society, the education we give our children will be erroneous, if not mischievous. Our notions on what education should be are vague and contradictory. Some want their children educated to be Calvinists; others, Unitarians; and still others, of no religion. All that government can do in this case, is to prohibit sectarianism, which, as things are, is virtually to forbid all religious instruction, all instruction in what it most concerns us to know.

"We want the influence of a body of men from which both government and people shall receive their education. Where is this body to be found? We answer unhesitatingly, it ought to be found in the Christian ministry." Yet he would not have the clergy teach with dogmatic authority, but by arousing and directing the attention of the people. He wanted them to convince, not dictate; persuade, not compel.

It may be said, that the clergy already do this; but they do it only in part; regard only the individual element, and that simply in relation to another world. Brownson would have them educate man both as the individual and the social man, therefore educate both man and society, and in relation to time as well as eternity. Christianity was designed to aid social as well as individual progress.

“Undoubtedly the first concern of Christianity is to perfect the individual, to fit him for that glorious social state into which the good enter after death; but it contemplates also the fitting of him for a more perfect social state here. The angels sang, ‘*On earth*, peace and good will toward men,’ as well as ‘Glory to God in the highest.’” Perfect every individual and undoubtedly you would perfect society; but it is necessary that the perfection of both be carried on together. “Man can live and grow only in society. His growth effects the growth of society, and that growth of society reacts on him, and effects a new growth. But, in some states of society, there must be a social growth before there can be,—in relation to a part of the community,—an individual growth. Many individuals occupy a position in the social scale that precludes the possibility of the growth of any part, except the animal part, of their nature. The man cannot germinate and expand into beauty or ripen into moral worth unless watered and cherished by those who occupy a more favorable position. Society bears them down, tramples them in the dust; and may not the clergy urge their claims, and urge them in loud and earnest tones? May they not point to the imperfections of that social state, where multitudes of human beings, endowed with a noble nature, are by the action of causes which exceed their energy or power to control, doomed to live and die mere animals? And in pointing out these imperfections, may they not direct attention to the discovery and application of a remedy? If they may not, how can they labor successfully for the perfection of all the individuals composing a community?”

"It may be alleged that, should the clergy bring out the social element and labor for the perfection of society, they would soon lose themselves in a land of shadows and merely amuse the people with dreams. Be it so, then. Even dreams are sometimes from God. Those visions of something better than what is, which are for ever coming to the minds and the hearts of the gifted and the good, are our pledges of a higher destiny. They familiarize us with loftier excellence, enchant us with a beauty superior to that of earth, and quicken within us the power to do and to endure everything to realize them. They may never be realized. It may be best that they should not. But the soul's struggles to realize them always make us stronger and better." "No one ever attained to eminence who did not see mountains rising far above the highest he could reach. There flit before the mind's eye of the greatest masters in painting and sculpture, forms of beauty which infinitely surpass their skill to transfer to the canvas or the marble. The immortal sons of song have visions of intellectual greatness and moral worth of which even their happiest numbers can give us but a faint conception. Yet it is in their daily and nightly communing with these beings of the ideal, to their continual efforts to seize and embody them, that they are indebted for the excellence they attain. It is in fact to the soul's power to fly off from the actual to the possible, to conceive something greater and better than what is, that we are indebted for all our improvement. The soul goes before the body. It seizes upon heaven while its clog of clay drops upon the earth. It is well that it is so. It is the condition of all progress. Let the soul, then, be ever breaking away from the present,

seeking a serener heaven, a warmer sun, and greener fields in the future ; it is but its effort to return to God of whom it carries with it, wherever it goes, an inward sentiment and an undying love."

While Brownson was in Canton, Henry D. Thoreau passed one summer vacation with him, to which he refers in the letter given here. The visit had an important influence on Thoreau's after-life, for it was Brownson that roused his enthusiasm for external nature. It is a pleasure to add that he obtained the wished-for position as a teacher, for which he had shown his fitness by his labors at Canton instructing the Brownson boys. Thoreau, not acquainted with Chelsea, was unable to ascertain where he could find Brownson.

"CONCORD, December 30th, 1837.

"Dear sir,—I have never ceased to look back with interest, not to say satisfaction, upon the short six weeks which I passed with you. They were an era in my life—the morning of a new *Lebenstag*. They are to me as a dream that is dreamt, but which returns from time to time in all its original freshness. Such a one as I would dream a second and a third time, and then tell before breakfast.

"I passed a few hours in the city, about a month ago, with the intention of calling on you, but not being able to ascertain, from the directory or other sources, where you had settled, was fain to give up the search and return home.

"My apology for this letter is to ask your assistance in obtaining employment. For, say what you will, this frostbitten 'forked carrot' of a body must be fed and

clothed after all. It is ungrateful, to say the least, to suffer this much abused case to fall into so dilapidated a condition that every northwester may luxuriate through its chinks and crevices, blasting the kindly affections it should shelter, when a few clouts will save it. Thank heaven, the toothache occurs often enough to remind me that I must be out patching the roof occasionally, and not be always keeping up a blaze upon the hearth within, with my German and metaphysical cat-sticks.

“But my subject is not postponed *sine die*. I seek a situation as teacher of a small school, or assistant in a large one, or, what is more desirable, as private tutor in a gentleman's family.

“Perhaps I should give some account of myself. I could make education a pleasant thing both to the teacher and the scholar. This discipline which we allow to be the end of life, should not be one thing in the schoolroom, and another in the street. We should seek to be fellow-students with the pupil, and we should learn of, as well as with him, if we would be most helpful to him. But I am not blind to the difficulties of the case; it supposes a degree of freedom, which rarely exists. It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive the full import of that word—Freedom—not a paltry republican freedom, with a *posse comitatus* at his heels to administer it in doses as to a sick child—but a freedom proportionate to the dignity of his nature—a freedom that shall make him feel that he is a man among men, and responsible only to that reason of which he is a particle, for his thoughts and his actions.

“I have ever been disposed to regard the cowhide as a non-conductor,—methinks that, unlike the electric

wire, not a single spark of truth is ever transmitted through its agency to the slumbering intellect it would address. I mistake, it may teach a truth in physics, but never a truth in morals.

"I shall be exceedingly grateful if you will take the trouble to inform me of any institution of the kind described that you may hear of. As referees I could mention Mr. Emerson, Mr. Hoar, and Dr. Ripley.

"I have perused with pleasure the first number of the Boston Review. I like the spirit of independence which distinguishes it. It is high time that we knew where to look for the expression of *American* thoughts. It is vexatious not to know beforehand whether we shall find our account in the perusal of an article. But the doubt speedily vanishes when we can depend upon having the genuine conclusions of a single reflecting man.

"Excuse this cold business letter. Please remember me to Mrs. Brownson, and don't forget to make mention to the children of the stern pedagogue that was.

"Sincerely and truly yours,

"HENRY D. THOREAU.

"P. S. I add this postscript merely to ask if I wrote this formal epistle. It absolutely freezes my fingers.

"Rev. O. A. BROWNSON, Chelsea, Mass."

In an address on Popular Education, delivered at Chelsea, in 1838, and of which several editions were printed and circulated, Brownson takes a broader and deeper view of education than has ordinarily been held. He says :

“ Education is something more than is commonly understood by the term. Education is something more than the ability to read, and write, and cypher, with a smattering of grammar, geography and history into the bargain. Education is the formation of character. It is not acquired in schools only, in the few months or the few years our children are in the school-room. It begins with the first impression made on the senses of the infant, and ends only with the last made on those of the man, before he sinks into the grave ; and it embraces the results of all the circumstances and influences which have, or which have had, the least possible bearing in making up or determining the individual character. These influences make up the real education received, Our schools do, and can do, but little. Even their good influences may be more than overbalanced by the evil influences at home, in the streets, or in society at large.

“ Education will go on ; there is no earthly power that can stop it. Our children will be educated in spite of all our efforts. But shall they be educated for good, or for evil ? This is a question for the community to determine. They are educated for good, only when they are educated for their destiny ; trained up, fitted to discharge the mission which Almighty God has given to each one. No education is a good one, which does not take the child from its mother’s arms, and train it up to be a man, with a lofty soul, with generous sympathies, high aims, conscious of his destiny, and prepared to leave his trace on his age and country, for good. God has given to each human being born into the world a high and important mission, a solemn and responsible charge, and that only is a good education which recognizes that

mission, that charge, and creates the power, and forms the character, to fulfil it. This is the education we want."

The remarks in the same address on the necessity of educating women as well as men, show his estimate of woman's part in the community. "In forming the character and determining the fate of a people, woman's is the more important, the more influential sex. She nurses us in our infancy, she plays with us in childhood, she is our companion in the vigor of manhood, she soothes us in the gloom of old age, bends over our dying bed, and drops her tear into our grave. Her rank determines the rank of the race. Ask nothing great of that nation where woman is man's slave, or the mere plaything of his pastime, the mere appanage of his pleasures. Man is often selfish and easily discouraged; he wavers before a difficult undertaking, and shrinks from even the righteous cause when it demands of its adherents the sacrifice of ease, reputation, rank, or wealth. He needs a voice that shall bid him be firm; be true to the righteous cause, in evil as well as in good report; true to duty, though he stand alone, though he be obliged to beg, though he die. It is woman alone, from the fulness of her inspiration, and the disinterestedness of her sympathies, that can give utterance to that voice. Let her then be educated, be educated to be the mother and the companion of *men*.—of such men, too, as a free government demands, as this country demands, to fulfil its destiny, to perfect its mission. All the children of the land must be educated thoroughly, morally, intellectually, physically, religiously. Nothing else can save us. Liberty is a mere dream when not coupled with universal education."

For the improvement of the district schools be urged parents and guardians to take more interest in these schools and to attend the district meetings, instead of leaving their affairs to be managed merely by three or four. They should know how the school is conducted, what progress the children are making in their studies, what good influences they are under, or what bad influences obtained in school, or out of school on the play-ground. "Many men," he says, "can trace more of the evil which has appeared in them in after-life to the evil influences at work out of the school, in the play hours, on the play-ground, than to any other source whatever. A careful inspection of district schools throughout the country would perhaps show us that many of them are as much nurseries of vice as of virtue."

He complains of the construction of the school-houses which seemed to be on the principle of occupying as little room and of being as inconvenient as possible. "A small box, some eighteen feet by twenty, placed at the corners of two streets, or crotch in the roads, with some four or five small windows, and furnished with a few hard benches without stay or support for the backs of the little occupants, has been deemed ample accommodation for thirty, forty, fifty, or a hundred scholars ranging from four to eighteen years of age. * * * We can remedy this evil only by enlarging our school-houses, making them spacious, light, and airy; in which there shall be room for the lungs and the mind to expand, for the young thoughts to grow."

Another complaint he makes of the incompetency of the teachers. One cause of the deficiency of good school-masters is the little demand in consequence of the

people not recognizing their importance. Teaching should be made so honorable and should be so well remunerated that men would be induced to qualify themselves for it and make it a business for life. Another cause is the want of proper normal schools which should do something to improve the matter, as well as the mechanism, of education. But these are not to be looked for till the public is more enlightened as to what education should be.

He further advocates the establishment of academies, or high-schools as we now call them, within the reach of the sons and daughters of our poorer citizens, who could avail themselves of nearly all the advantages of academic instruction if the academy were within reach of their own home, but have not the means to go off fifty or a hundred miles to attend it.

CHAPTER XII.

CHELSEA MARINE HOSPITAL. — THE BOSTON QUARTERLY REVIEW AND ITS CONTRIBUTORS.

Soon after Van Buren's inauguration, he appointed George Bancroft collector of the port of Boston, and Bancroft changed his residence from Springfield to that city. A great number of offices in the district were at the collector's disposal, and after considering the nature of the duties required of each, he determined to offer Brownson the stewardship of the United States Marine Hospital in Chelsea. This hospital was then in a delightful and airy situation on a plot containing many acres of land and extending to the river near the ferry. At the southeast end was a large granite residence for the steward and his family, and a similar one at the northwest for the resident surgeon. Fruit, vegetables, poultry, swine, etc., were raised in abundance upon the grounds, and the salary attached to the office was equal to the highest annual income Brownson had ever received.

Bancroft, in offering this position to Brownson, informed him that he had hundreds of applications for the office, but he desired Brownson to have it, because the duties were mainly visits of inspection and superintendence, and making reports, and ordering stores for consumption, which, when he was used to making them, would occupy but little time each day, and the emoluments of the office would be a material aid to him, and he would find them no impediment to his other work.

Brownson had never thought of any office for himself, and at first declined Bancroft's offer, but ended by accepting it.

One of his objections was that holding an office under the government would hamper his freedom of political discussion, which he was determined to maintain in all circumstances. Bancroft assured him that he was familiar with his political views and his manner of discussing political measures, and that there was no objection to the freedom he had always exercised in this connection; that, in fact, it was rather desirable than otherwise, as his independent manner of speaking gave additional weight when he supported government measures, as in most instances he did.

He held the office for four years, and was removed when the Whigs came into power with Gen. Harrison in 1841. When a vacancy occurred in the position of surgeon, Brownson obtained the appointment of Dr. Otis, a man well skilled in medicine and surgery, with a passion for reading the better class of books and periodicals. He was also removed in 1841, but continued to give his professional attendance to Brownson and his family as long as they remained in Chelsea. For this service he would never accept any pay, though far enough from being well-off. He said the only return he would accept was the loan of reading matter, to which, of course, he was always welcome.

Otis and Brownson coöperated in carrying out a number of improvements in connection with the hospital, increasing the comforts and improving the health of the sailors.

The religious services were held every Tuesday afternoon by "Father Cleveland," the well-known missionary, then far advanced in life, and most venerable in appearance. One of Brownson's sons, then four years of age, attended Mr. Cleveland's sermons and read the tracts which he distributed, one of which last, on Matth. xvi. 26, made an impression on his mind which he never forgot, and gave a religious bent to his entire life.

During the year 1837, Brownson decided to edit a review of his own. The periodical press of the country had always been at his service as far as he had sought to use it. He had also the newspapers which he edited, often several of them at the same time; but a graver organ was required for the exposition of his full view of the great questions of philosophy, religion, and social and moral progress. The Christian Examiner had been open to him, and he had no reason to suppose it would not continue to be; but still, however indulgent, liberal, and obliging its censorship might be, it was censorship; and while it might not refuse to publish what was written, it hindered him from writing what he might. He undertook the new review, then, for himself; not because he was certain that the public wanted it, but because he wanted it, as a medium through which he might say to those who chose to read it just what he wished to say, and in his own way and time.

He gave it the name of Boston Quarterly Review, both to designate the place of publication, and as a sort of compliment to the "city of notions" and of liberal ideas, where, too, he was confident of finding the most sympathy and the best friends.

He did not contemplate writing the entire Review himself, but would have its pages open to the discussion of all subjects of general and permanent interest, by any one who was able to express his thoughts—provided he had any—with spirit, in good temper, and in good taste. He invited several of his friends in Boston and elsewhere to contribute articles, and received assistance of that sort from George Bancroft, George Ripley, A. Bronson Alcott, Sarah Margaret Fuller, Anne Charlotte Lynch, and others.

R. W. Emerson excused himself from contributing to the first number, that of January, 1838, in a note which, like everything Emerson wrote, has interest for most readers.

“CONCORD, 15 November, 1837.

“ My dear sir. —I hear gladly of your new enterprize literary-philosophic—of which I had learned a little before—I thank you too for the friendly interest you are so good as to express in my igniferous pen. I have the success of Carlyle very much at heart, and should gladly get for it the advantage of a good word in your journal. But I have at Dr. Walker's request promised to furnish some notice of it for the Examiner; and I wish to do the same thing in a newspaper. Meantime I am fully occupied in the preparation of a new course of lectures shortly to commence and all my scribbling has given me no facility in turning occasional paragraphs for the press. So that I dare not promise a line for your January Journal. Now when I remember some long standing engagement to Mr. Palfrey whose fulfilment is never nearer than rainbow distance, I am warned not to prom-

ise any new contributions. Yet the charater you prescribe to your journal makes me hope I may find some skill to help it. Though I know your residence must hinder you from much lecture going, yet I venture to send you a card if you should chance to be near me some evening next winter.

“Yours with great regard,

“R. W. EMERSON.

“REV. O. A. BROWNSON, Chelsea, Mass.”

Not long afterwards, however, Emerson with the transcendental portion of the Unitarians founded an organ of their own, *The Dial*, to which he devoted his contributions as well as his editorial labors.

Mrs. Whitman, in spite of her apprehensions of a speedy dissolution, recovered sufficiently to write for the *Review* on German literature, and lived to a good old age.

Here is her answer to the request made to her.

“November 19, PROVIDENCE.

“Dear sir,—Your friendly letter gave me much pleasure and I should sooner have acknowledged your kind proposal to furnish me with the *Review*, had I not been prevented by illness. I have been long troubled with an organic disease of the heart, which has of late been rapidly gaining ground. I have no anxiety, however, on the subject, nor any fear of death. The dissolution of the body has no terrors for me.* Yet I feel each day more and more how glorious and blessed a thing is this conscious being of ours, and my faith in its continuance

* She outlived her correspondent.

and progressive nature becomes daily more steadfast. I regret the loss of health only on account of the debility which often unfits me for any bodily or mental exertion. I dare not, therefore, enter into any engagement to write for you. If, however, I should complete anything adapted for your Review I will certainly let you have the *refusal* of it. I have thought of writing a Review of Richter's Titan and Flegel Jahre. Jean Paul is a prime favorite with me, and has even rivalled Goethe in my good graces. I had hoped you would have visited us this fall. You would have found many true friends here. Most of the high-minded intelligent young men of the place hold your name in profound veneration which you may rest assured is in no way lessened by your having volunteered to serve in the 'noble army of martyrs.'

"One may form some idea of the popularity of your Review by casting an eye on the reading table of our Athenaeum where it is to be seen in a very tattered and dog-eared condition long before the end of the quarter while its sister journals lie around in all their virgin gloss of freshness. Dr. Wayland whose selfish policy I have often observed leads him to watch narrowly the fluctuating current of popular opinion, and who always sails with the tide and trims to the breeze, fancied he had seized the very moment to gain a great occasion of public favor by denouncing you just as you had rendered yourself obnoxious by your attack upon the rich and the powerful. He found the capricious public less practicable than he had expected,—his article was universally condemned as egotistical and altogether irrelevant, and the sentence in which he takes credit to himself for the magnanimous confession of his poverty has become

almost a by-word for its absurdity. This *poor* man treads on the carpets of Turkey—the light of day comes to him softened by the purple silks of India, and the damp brows of the amateur agriculturalist are shaded by the costliest beaver! You have well answered him in the sentence beginning, ‘It is easy for a Lucullus or a Seneca, etc.’* —What do you think of his assertion that a sufficient refutation of your remarks on the clergy* is to be found in the fact that when a traveller lames his horse or meets with any accident in passing through a country town the first person he enquires for is the clergyman? Is not this ‘rather *particularly*’ *sagacious*? Might he not as well infer the morality of publicans from the fact that when a traveller enters a town cold and hungry he invariably inquires for the tavern keeper?—You ask me what I think of the poetry of the Dial—I will answer you by referring you to an article called ‘new poetry’ in the last number. If you have not patience to read it all pray do not forget to read the last piece of poetry quoted therein beginning ‘Yes they torment me most exceedingly,’ etc. Yet there are beautiful and noble thoughts in this *new poetry*, though for the most part very crudely and affectedly expressed. Among the prose articles one of the best is the ‘Lesson for the Day’ in the last number. Mr. Pabodie, I hear, is coming down on them again. The sketch which he attempted of Miss Fuller’s character was considered so successful that he began to think he had a special talent for portrait painting. He has since tried his hand at another subject—a full length,

* “It is easy for a Lucullus or a Seneca to praise poverty; but we are not ashamed to own that we have uniformly found poverty a very disagreeable companion, and one which by no means improves by familiarity. We are not among those who sing the praises of poverty. Few poor men are.” *Boston Quarterly Review*, 1840, p. 457.

on which he bestowed great labour, but did not succeed I think in getting a very accurate likeness. He could not easily comprehend a character acting from purely disinterested and philanthropic motives, having himself an indolent mind which is only stimulated to action by the love of applause, professing to believe in the essential fallibility of human wisdom and the utter insignificance of human effort, he sees nothing worth a wise man's attainment, excepting always the 'most sweet voices' of the multitude. His philosophical creed might be comprised in the following lines from 'Rejected Addresses':

'Thinking is but an idle waste of thought,

And nought is everything, and everything is nought.'
Perhaps we may add too from another source his ethical---

'Then since we cannot see beyond to-day,
Let's seize the present good, and take the nearest way.'
All thinking minds, perhaps, have known something of the mood so well hit off in the first two lines—but with Pabodie I fear it will be an enduring one. His skepticism. I think, springs less from the morbid indifference of an o'erwrought earnest mind wearied with the first fruitless efforts in the pursuit of truth, than from the perhaps unconscious action of self love eagerly grasping at a philosophy which seems to offer an excuse for his indolence, and which allows him to assume the character of a profound thinker at a small expense; for, according to him, in exact proportion to a man's wisdom is his contempt for all knowledge. He has heard much of Goethe's indifference and not knowing much about its nature, alludes to him as exhibiting a striking exemplification

of the general apathy and nonchalance peculiar to great minds. I told him he could not have chosen a more unfortunate subject for the illustration of his position—Goethe's indifferency, if it can be so called, springing from a feeling the very reverse of that which he had supposed, an indifferency which looked upon all things, however seemingly insignificant, as manifestations of the infinite, and therefore equally deserving attention and inquiry—thus he threw his whole soul at times into the analysis of a flower or the decomposition of a mineral. The indifferency which regards all things in this glorious universe as equally admirable is at least a noble error. Shakespeare says, the prosperity of a word lies in the ear of him that hears it. I think he is right, else would my unpremeditated words not have won for me such pleasant flatteries. Your offer of knightly homage and service is accepted. You have, I see, already espoused the cause of woman and proved yourself an able champion. I thank you in behalf of the sex for the few seasonable words which you uttered of late in defence of her equality and independence.* The entire pecuniary dependence of married women is I think a fruitful source of domestic evil. The ideas which you have broached in your two articles on the labouring classes are slowly making their way in the world. Some who were shocked and startled at the first, tolerated and afterwards approved the second—many allow them to be equitable who pronounce them impracticable. Is not an impracticable truth in ethics an anomaly? Some short-sighted politicians say, 'But why should the poor man complain? Since property is always changing hands, his turn may come by and by.'—Provided

* In *Modern French Literature*, Brownson's Works, vol. xix, p. 48.

they and their sons fare well they care little for their poor neighbour, or their remote posterity. Few men of sense question the justice of your remarks on the priesthood, but many talk of dangerous truth and useful prejudices. I think with Benjamin Constant, that no man need trouble himself with the preservation of useful prejudices. 'Nature,' he says, 'takes care to retain them while they are needed.' We may safely direct all our energies to their extirpation without any fear of a premature deliverance from them. I shall be happy to hear from you again whenever you have leisure to write, and am,

"Your friend,

"SARAH H. WHITMAN."

Miss Tyler advocated women's rights in the Review in a strong, but withal womanly manner. A letter selected from her correspondence will serve as a specimen and give some notion of her way of thinking.

"CHARLESTOWN, May 10th, 1842.

"Mr. Brownson,—I want to have a chat about woman's rights and other matters. So it seems you don't like the change in human affairs. Ah! woman will yet reign triumphant. We shall have you 'lords of creation' all under our thumbs yet. With regard to this vow of obedience, I have thought that, as woman is the 'weaker vessel,' 'tis unfair to require of her as many vows as of man. Now, if we pass the vow of obedience to man's account, 'twill give him just twice as many as the woman takes, which is as it should be, and you surely cannot be so deficient in gallantry as to deny that

woman is capable of directing in all family affairs at least. Mr. Hazlitt, exhorting young men to fall in love betimes, says, should you refine too much in your ideas of the sex, forgetting yourself in a dream of exalted perfection, you will want an eye to cheer you, *a hand to guide you*, a bosom to lean on, and will stagger into your grave, old before your time, unloved and unlovely. But this, I suspect, was but a sudden outburst of gallantry, as he says other things of woman which modify it exceedingly. Seriously,—it always makes me laugh to write this word, but I'll try it once again,—Seriously, I might make a sort of reservatory promise in case of emergencies. I might grow restive under the yoke,—but I don't think I could possibly marry a man whom I did not feel willing to obey, when I married him, (Isn't this a bull? I don't know how else to express it, however, without making a clumsy piece of work of it,) and I know of but one privilege that I should wish were I about to marry, and that I should be very apt to take whether 'twere granted or no—the privilege of teasing my spouse to my heart's content. I should have to set my wits to work to steer clear of the vow, but that wouldn't be much—or the teasing would be one of my emergencies, for which I suggested a provision.

“As for man's much-vaunted superiority, I never bestowed much thought upon the matter. I hate to think so, but it seems to me that though extraordinary men are vastly superior to extraordinary woman, both in number and degree, ordinary men and women are extremely alike.

“I fear I shall never be properly impressed with a deep sense of the importance of woman's rights. Doctor

Walker once said that we had one right which was as much a right as any other, though we never seemed to regard it as such. 'The right of waiving our right.' I think if woman were invested with all the rights claimed for her by some of her good friends, I should be for waiving a majority of mine.

"As for politicks, I think men make themselves ridiculous enough about them without any assistance from the women. I heard that Mrs. Folsom walked up to a young lady in a shop in Boston, the other day, with 'And you, all dressed up in your ribbons, what do you think of woman's rights?' I should have told her that one of woman's rights is to dress as she pleases.

"I was struck with your remarks about sensibility. You speak of woman's 'exquisite sensibility' and then give your opinion of the depth and acuteness of man's feeling, as if you considered depth an attribute of sensibility. I have no faith in its depth. I think it the shallowest of all feeling. I know not that 'tis peculiar to either sex, but I dislike it exceedingly wherever I meet with it. People of sensibility always disgust me with their recklessness of others' feelings. Quick feelings they have, and they gratify them too, let the consequences to others be what they may. Their want of delicacy shocks me; they are very impertinent and obtrusive, treading upon every feeling, every spiritual corn, without the least compunction, and their only excuse for the mischief they make is their sensibility, their feeling. Their excuse, do I say? Why, they make it their boast, and expect you to admire them for it. Now, I can tolerate it as a weakness, or anything else in reason; but as for

admiring it, that is a stretch of complacency to which I can never hope to attain.

“ Sensibility is an acute disorder ; it has nothing of the chronick about it. If people of sensibility felt deeply and lastingly as well as quickly, they would be all one string of elbows, from top to toe, or of ‘ crazy bones ; ’ for that, I suppose, is the idea that was lingering in your mind when you said man had ‘ more elbows to be struck ’ than woman ; at all events, that is the idea the reading of it gave me. It carried me back long years to my ‘ ancient times,’ as the histories say, when we used to bump our elbows to find where our crazy bones were.

“ There are few things that do not carry me back to the days of my childhood. I know not how it is, for I cannot think with many, childhood so much happier than, if so happy as, the rest of life. I had had no fine times to remember in those days, nor do I think I enjoyed the reality half so much as I enjoy the remembrance of them.

“ I recollect having seen very little, if anything, of Byron in your review. Why won’t you write about him and praise him to the skies ? I never can recollect what a wicked one he was, and when I hear him abused I’m ready to cry with grief and vexation, and yet I never can resist the temptation to read wherever I see his name mentioned even though I have every reason to think ’tis not in approbation.

“ Excuse my impertinence, if you think it such. I couldn’t resist the impulse and opportunity to prate a little. I read the Review with much pleasure, and I wanted to talk about it, and my besetting sin is, when I begin to write, not to know when to stop. I often quote the young parson saying grace, in illustration of my

infirmity. He said grace two hours, till the dinner was spoiled, and his hostess stopped him. 'Ah! madam,' said he, 'I can go on well enough, but hang me if I can stop.'

"Yours respectfully,

"R. A. TYLER.

"P. S. After all—I had thought not to have a postscript—but there's no escape. These ideas, cogitations, vagaries, or whatever you please to term them, were elicited by your article on modern French Literature.* My references to it were so very—very—(oh! dear me, a word has slipped right through my fingers, and to save my soul I can't find it, though I've hunted the dictionary through; it begins with p, and is just the word I want,—but 'tis gone forever,—distinct must do in its place,)—distinct that I feared you might not understand. You are aware there are writers who envelope their subject in such a flood of light as to blind their readers, and I thought my lucid allusion might have the same effect upon you unless I explained. Once more, yours etc.,

"R. A. TYLER."

Another lady who wrote for the Boston Quarterly Review was Miss Lynch, afterwards known as Mrs. Botta, in New York. She was a frequent writer of long letters to Brownson, all interesting. One of the shortest is here selected.

"PROVIDENCE, April 18, 1840.

"I thank you most sincerely, Mr. Brownson, for your letter of March. You would forgive the impatience with which I waited for its arrival, if you could be aware

* Brownson's Work, Vol. xix, p. 48.

of the pleasure that even this slight acquaintance with you and your writings has afforded me.—Since, then, you will not acknowledge me as a follower, I shall claim to be even more. You have elsewhere spoken of ‘a choice circle of friends’ as essential to your happiness. Tell me, if that circle is already too large to admit one more? for to that I aspire.—Montaigne says that *women* are incapable of friendship. I think both women and men are in most cases, for it requires a more elevated and generous nature than is common. If my experience has not been peculiar there is in this human race (and the more I love them, the more keenly I feel it) a want of magnanimity, and too much that is selfish and base,—but my standard is high and my constitution peculiar: so, perhaps, I demand too much of them.

“Now, if you refuse me this claim, I shall despair. Allow me at least to be a candidate for admission into that choice circle until I can prove myself not unworthy of it. I pray you, do not set this down as sentimentalism or romance. It is only the aspiration that requires more than it often finds to venerate and admire. My father was an Irishman, and transmitted to me his warmth of heart, as well as his freedom of mind and love of liberty. (He was a rebel and an exile by the way,)

“Charles Elwood, *New Views*, and the *April Quarterly* have been received within a few weeks. Of Charles Elwood I cannot say enough. My own experience goes with him to the close of the chapter on Immortality, and then, alas! he leaves me. There for long years I have vegetated, but with this difference *now*—I am beginning to feel like the trees in the April sun, though leafless yet,

the circulation has begun, and there is promise of foliage and flowers.

“I have been engaged since I received the New Views, and am keeping them as a *corps de reserve*, and my last Review I have sent a missionary to the politicians—not, however, without first reading all the articles by the editor.

“Mr. Emerson has just concluded a course of lectures here, wholly admired by some, and wholly condemned by others. I think he is a very charming man, and his character a very elevated one, but of his intellect and reasoning powers I have no high opinion. The remark he made of another applies to himself. ‘He is not a whole man’—Listening to one of his lectures affects me like the music of an Eolian harp, beautiful but vague, without connexion or point, one recollects the delightful impression without being able to recall the strain of the one or the idea of the other.

“I have not yet had time to read Jouffroy, but I heard that part which relates to necessity read aloud one evening at Mrs. Whitman’s. I believe it did not convince her. We both thought he spoke rather contemptuously of necessarians, and perhaps he did not receive as much grace from the fact as he otherwise might have done.

“I assure you nothing would give me so much pleasure as to visit you and your family. I thank you from my heart for your kind invitation. I intend to visit Boston in a few weeks, and I shall then promise myself some hours at least of your society. I regret to hear of your ill health. I fear your occupations leave no time for a correspondence so unimportant to you as this. If this is the case, may I flatter myself that you will not fail to tell

me, for I would rather forego the pleasure of receiving your letters than encroach on your duties or leisure, though, recollect, I do not promise not to write to you,

“Truly and respectfully yours,

“ANNE C. LYNCH.”

Miss Peabody, who was one of the most constant and appreciative listeners to Brownson's sermons, also wrote for his Review. One of her letters is here inserted.

“Dear Mr. Brownson,—I have heard you express so many of the views, though in a different form, of the manuscript which I enclose to you, that I am tempted to give it to you, and let it take its chances in your Review. It is number four of those articles on the Hebrew Scriptures, published in the Christian Examiner in 1834, but written in 1826 (the first year of my *intellectual* life properly speaking). I wrote them with no view of ever being an author, but copied them off ten years after with some improvements especially in this last article. Yet as you remember even then the questions which have since been so warmly discussed as to inspiration, miracles, etc., had not been brought up in our community, and the word *transcendentalism* I had never seen except in Coleridge's Friend. Had not Mr. Norton cut off untimely my little series which consisted of six numbers, it would have recorded quite a little historical fact, there in the bosom of Unitarianism, an unlearned girl, with only the help of those principles of philosophising she gathered from the perusal of Coleridge's Friend, and relying simply on her own poetical apprehension as a principle of exegesis, should have seen just what is here

expressed, concerning the socialism of true religion, and the divinity of Christ. When a thing is true, it is true many ways, and has many sides of evidence, and so I should think there might be an interest to you in seeing that there was evident to a simple seeker in these ancient records that characteristic of religion which has come to you through an experience so intense of the social evils of the present world.

“ Perhaps it would be well for you or me to write a *note* introductory of this article, stating its dates, etc. I should rather *you* would write it, and if you do will you please let me see it. I believe I told you the circumstances of its being rejected from the Christian Examiner. I had the satisfaction at the same time of having Mr. Walker's good word. He said he liked the article, best of all the four, and he had put in the other three freely and expressed his liking of them. Indeed, had it not been for this I should never have thought of presenting them. Mr. Greenwood saw by accident the article on *the creation*, which one of my friends had in manuscript, and asked me to print it, and this gave me my *first idea* of printing *anything*.

“ Yours respectfully,

“ E. P. P——.”

Mr. Brewster's articles were contributed at the suggestion of Mr. Kelly, whose long and valuable services in Congress are not yet forgotten by the friends of our Union. Kelly had been an attendant on Brownson's church services in Boston. He was working in a jewelry shop when Brownson perceiving his great talents, advised

him to become a lawyer and got him into the office of John P. Healy, a cousin of Brownson's wife.

“ PHILADELPHIA, December 18th, 1841.

“ Respected friend,—I have been on the point of writing to you half a dozen times since my return from Boston, but when I would think of your manifold engagements and of the extensive correspondence you must keep up, my conscience would check me and say, ‘young man, content yourself with perusing the Quarterly and holding spiritual communion with its editor.’ But for the present I’ve thrown conscience to the wind, and will inflict myself upon you though the devil have to wait for copy. As you did me the honor, when last among us, to share my humble fare, my townsmen take it for granted that I am to some extent advised of your intentions, and now that our lecture season is fairly open, some of them call on me almost daily, to know whether you will visit our city during the winter. There is a growing desire to hear you; and although Vethake, Reed, and a score of miscellaneous courses appear to have occupied the ground, a short course by you would be well attended. If you cannot undertake this, will you not give me a week, when your book shall have gone to the press, and edify our people by repeating some of your occasional addresses from the stands that will be joyfully tendered you.

“ In either event I as a personal favor request you to give us a Sunday, and preach to our congregation. It is transcendental Unitarian, under the pastoral care of F. A. Eustiss, and reads the Dial and Boston Quarterly and leaves each member to the guidance of his conscience

thus enlightened. It is not very numerous, but is growing rapidly, and already embodies considerable talent and real respectability.

“ You doubtless had a pleasant visit to Nantucket—A lady favored me with a perusal of quite a full abstract of your lectures, made by Mrs. Gardner. Her friends are not the least anxious of our citizens to meet you. If not too late, permit me to congratulate you on the manner in which you triumphed over the small-fry who thrust themselves between you and the young men in whose hearts you hold the first place—the young men are with you everywhere.

“ Brewster some time since delivered a lecture on ‘The Political Life and Writings of Milton.’ It was made up in the style of his article on Charles Lamb.* He has altered it from the lecture form, with a view to your work. Yesterday I told him I would write. He bid me ask you if you would like to have an article on the political life and writings of Milton for your March number. It is in good taste, and very clever, but not equal to Macaulay in power.†

“ But I’m spinning this out to an awful length. Pardon the infliction. And in proof of your forgiveness, answer and let me know about when you will visit me, and what you’ll do for us while here.—I have just been interrupted by a visit from E. Beale, Jr. of Randolph, and from Dr. Patterson. You may guess our theme. The Dr. wishes to be kindly remembered. Please make my

* *Charles Lamb*, in *Boston Quarterly Review* for April 1841, p. 214, by B. H. Brewster.)

† The article is published in the *Boston Quarterly Review*, for July 1842, at page 322.

compliments to Mrs. Brownson and believe me as ever your friend.

“WM. D. KELLEY.

“P. S. If ‘Le Pays et le Gouvernement’ and ‘Esclavage Moderne’ can be readily obtained, will you be good enough to bring them with you?”

“Another contributor from Philadelphia was Dr. Henry S. Patterson of whom Kelley makes mention, who may be permitted to introduce himself by the letter which follows.

“PHILADELPHIA, May 29th, '41.

“Dear sir,—I now send you the article upon Shelley which I promised to offer to your inspection when in Boston last Summer. I have written it off in haste under the pressure of numerous engagements, and would have sent it sooner if possible—Is it too late for your July number? I wish you would let me know sincerely what you think about it; and whether my poor contributions are really of any worth to you. Recollect that the body of this article, as well as the whole of that in your last, were written as *lectures* for a PHILADELPHIA audience.

“In the last there occur several horrible errors that have crept in,—the Lord knows how,—unless it was that the young friend who copied most of it for me could not read my hand very readily. Thus at p. 190 we have ‘*Strong* choir’ for ‘*Starry*’! and at p. 202 ‘Diocles’ for ‘Damocles.’ On the next page is ‘creditor’ for ‘debtor,’ which I suppose must be my own. On 213 is ‘titles’ for ‘tithes,’ which is the printer’s.

“Thierry’s Conquest of England by the Normans was translated and published in London a year or so

since. It is evidently a bookseller's job, however and the translator appears to have labored under the disadvantage of having a very limited acquaintance with both French and English.

"You have a class of admirers here who, although sincere and earnest men whom every sincere man must respect, are not calculated to increase your general popularity.—Your 'Conversations with a Radical' 'Public Lands,' 'Workingmen's Address,' and 'Future Policy,' with my articles and the 'Thoughts on Labor' in the Dial, have constituted the Sunday morning reading at the Hall of the 'Friends of Human Progress' for some time past. The 'Community' question is exciting more attention and discussion here at present than it perhaps has ever done before. I will endeavor to send you in a few days a pamphlet issued by Mr. Ginal, Pastor of the German Rationalist church, who is getting up a colony for Texas, somewhat on the Fourier plan.

"My article I leave with you to treat as you may think it deserves.

"Very respectfully,

"H. S. Patterson."

Of all his associates Brownson esteemed none more highly than Alexander H. Everett, whose too early death was an irreparable loss to American literature. At the date of the following letters he was president of the Louisiana State College.

"JEFFERSON COLLEGE,

"ST. JAMES'S PARISH, LA., Oct. 18, 1841.

"My dear sir,—I find on arranging my library since my establishment here, that I have no complete set of

the Quarterly, and no copies of the two numbers containing my articles on the Currency. They are, if I recollect rightly, those for July, 1839, and January, 1840. I should like, if convenient, to possess a complete set of the work; and will thank you to request Mr. Greene to make me up one, if he has the means, and deposit it for me at Little & Brown's. If he is not able to make up a complete set, he can, perhaps, furnish me with the two numbers containing the articles on the Currency, which he will also, in that case, have the goodness to deposit with Little & Brown.

"I have just received the October number. It has come sooner than any of the other periodicals of the same date, though not with quite the punctuality of the preceding one, which was delivered to me at the post-office on the first of July. I have read the greater part of the present number with much interest. Your article on Bancroft's History is a generous tribute to real merit. I am rather curious to see the development of your theory of government as indicated in this and another recent article. In general! we want nothing so much in this country, in a literary way, as a thorough discussion of the principles of government. Libraries are published every year upon men and measures, but almost nothing upon principles. I have a few crudities, at the bottom of my own inkstand, which I hope, at one time or another, to put into shape. In the meantime we are looking to you for a Restoration of Political Science.

"I cannot quite sympathize with H. S. P. (whoever he may be) in regard to Shelley. His works seem to me to belong to the *genre ennuyeux*,—the only one, as

Voltaire correctly remarks, which is absolutely bad : Tous les genres sont bons, hors les genres ennuyeux.

"I have been through life, and am still, a patient and persevering reader of poetry. But though I have made repeated attempts, I have never been able to get through a single canto of the *Revolt of Islam*.* Time and again have I taken up that poem, in order to satisfy myself, whether the last word in the title means the Mahometan religion, or one of the parties in the firm of Slam, Bang & Co., but in each case, before I could ascertain the point, I found myself nodding, and the book dropping from my hands, so that the question remains to the present day, for me an unsettled one. I know no poem, with the exception, perhaps, of Drinkwater's *United Worlds*, that tries so severely my organ of keep-awakeativeness. All this, however, is, perhaps, only a proof of my want of taste.

"I see that you have become the organ of Orpheus Alcott. What is the meaning of this? Is the *Dial* defunct? Does that mysterious *Horologe* no longer 'repeat the progress of the hour and the day?' I have some doubts, however, whether the presence of Orpheus in the *Quarterly* will do it much good. Eurydice-Fuller, whom you appear to have lost from your pages, was to my taste, the better contributor of the two. How fares it, in general, with transcendentalism about these times? How are Norton and Ripley carrying on the war? What is the prevalent opinion upon the doctrine of Spinoza? Our faithless chronicles tell us nothing but the price of sugar and coffee. Let me

* Brownson used to say that a gentleman in Salem—Dr. Prince if I remember right—and himself were the only two persons in the United States who had read the whole of that poem.

hear from you occasionally, when you have leisure to write, and believe me, with great regard,

“Truly yours,

“A. H. EVERETT.”

“JEFFERSON COLLEGE,

“ST. JAMES’S PARISH, LA., April 1, 1842.

“Rev. O. A. BROWNSON.

“Dear sir,—I received a few days ago your friendly letter of the 27th of February. I had put the right construction on your delay in replying to my previous communications, and far from wondering, or complaining, that you had not done more, have been constantly surprised to see how much you habitually do. I am greatly obliged by your courteous and partial remarks in regard to myself. I can certainly claim no merit for having treated with respect and attention a countryman whom the highest authorities abroad have considered as entitled to our highest intellectual distinctions: but without regard to this circumstance, which would not, perhaps, weigh as much with me as with some others, I have had no other motive in seeking and cultivating your acquaintance, but the pleasure which I have found in your conversation. I have always cherished the hope, that some lucky chance might throw us into the same circle, and regret that we have not the means at present at this college of tempting you to the genial climate of Louisiana by the offer of a chair on philosophy—A permanent situation of that kind would, I think, better enable you to pursue your habitual studies, and present their results, than you can under the pressure of the

various avocations in which you are engaged. In the meantime you are making the most of the Sparta, that has fallen to your lot. I notice with great pleasure the approbation, which your lectures have met with, particularly in Philadelphia. The last newspaper, that I have seen, is not of so agreeable a kind, being an account of the loss you met with at Fredonia in your manuscripts. I hope the latter did not include your forthcoming work on Intellectual Philosophy.—The result of your attempt to defend the system of Cousin was the same, which followed a similar attempt of my own some years ago. I had been reading several works proceeding from the spiritual school, and was so much pleased with their general tone, that I felt a strong bias in favor of the doctrine, under the influence of which I sat down to write an article for the N. A. Review.—I asserted when I began to state this doctrine, as I understood it, particularly the leading notion of Kant and all his followers, that the mind has the power of originating ideas not suggested by sensation and not relating to its own operations, such as space, time, and cause, or power. But on reconsidering the subject, with the great precision necessary for writing I found the ground, which I thought I was standing upon, slip from under me; and, instead of refuting Locke, was obliged to give in my adhesion to him, as it appears in the article in question. I put it into Cousin's hands, when I was last in Paris, and he gave me in return one of his published lectures on Locke, which, however, I did not find satisfactory. There is not much I think, to object to in Locke's Metaphysics, at least on this point. His great error is in denying the reality of moral sentiments, which is substantially equivalent to the

denial of the reality of moral distinctions.—I have not seen the work of Leroux, or read much of Leibnitz. He is chiefly known to the present generation by his system of monads and foreordained harmony, as expressed in Voltaire's *Candide*, which is probably not a very fair version.—I shall look with impatience for your work. As to my own, concerning which you kindly express an interest, I wish they were in greater forwardness than they are.—I intended to begin with a publication in a book form of my articles in the N. A. Review, which would make two or three volumes. These were written at a mature period of life, under circumstances somewhat favorable to deliberate composition, and on subjects, generally, of permanent interest. I suppose they are as good as anything I am capable of producing. I am now engaged in making arrangements for bringing out a collection of these, and also think of publishing a volume of my addresses. May I ask the favor of you to hand to Mr. Hale, No. 5 Franklin St., the two numbers of your Review containing the articles on the currency?

“I am, dear sir, with great respect most truly yours,

“A. H. EVERETT.”

When Theodore Parker first came to Boston he attached himself very closely to Brownson and adopted his views to a great extent. He was a contributor at first to the Boston Quarterly Review; but afterwards walked with the transcendentalists. The last article in that Review was a thorough discussion of Parker's “Discourse on matters pertaining to religion” and filled the entire number for October, 1842.

When he had read the article Parker wrote to Brownson.

“ WEST ROXBURY, 2nd December, 1842.

“ Dear friend,—Since completing the course of sermons just delivered in Boston, I have read carefully your long and elaborate article on my poor book. I felt the natural desire (of every young man) to read what a serious person writes concerning my own work ; but when the last number of your journal appeared it was not possible for me to read and do justice to it, without interrupting a train of thoughts on which I was then intent. Now the opportunity has come and I have read your review with *such impartiality* as might be expected. I sincerely thank you, for the uniform tone of kindness and respect with which you have treated both me and the book,—a tone rare enough in all controversies, but especially rare in philosophico-theological controversies. You are willing to suppose that I sought nothing but the truth—and have neither called me hard names, nor suspected my motives to be base, or selfish. I never doubted your motives were pure as I think my own to be, and while I thank you for this general tone of respect, you will allow me to say I think it is as honorable to you as it is agreeable to me. We differ widely on many points—*very* widely on some. On others, I think the difference is in *words* and *formal statements*—and there only. I do not see that you have shaken my position, which I have attempted to defend. But on this point, of course, we shall not agree. Well, then, I have made my statement; you have made yours. Both seeking (philosophically) the truth, and through that (practic.

ally) the WELFARE OF MANKIND. Both statements are before the public. If I have erred—why, there is your correction. If we both are mistaken—why, it is so, and our errors will by and by come to the ground. I think you mistaken—and you think I am mistaken—in certain points where we differ. Let the *wise* part of the public judge between us. If we should open a regular theological controversy, and fight as the Baxtorfs and Cappels, Priestleys and Horsleys have done before us,—why, what then? I think we should lose our time, and waste our oil, doing little good to the world.

“There is one thing, however, that I have long intended to do, and that is, to write a review of your journal from beginning to end, treating of your writings under three heads : *Philosophical*, *Theological*, and *Ethico-political*. If the desire to do so strengthens, as I think it will, I shall do it in the course of the winter, but in that case, I should not treat your review of my book in a *polemical* way, but only as (in part) an exponent of your own theological and philosophical system. While I assure you that I do not admit the inferences you sometimes draw from words (and you do not affirm that I admit them) be assured that all you have said against me does not lessen my esteem for you.

“I am truly and sincerely yours,

“THEODORE PARKER.”

CHAPTER XIII.

ESSAY ON THE LABORING CLASSES.—DEFENCE OF THE ESSAY.

IN July 1840, Brownson published in the Boston Quarterly Review his article on "The laboring classes." The doctrines put forth in that essay were mostly such as he had held and advocated for some years previously, but collected in one systematic view, and carried out to their logical consequences, they startled the country.

The occasion availed of was a review of Carlyle's "Chartism," then just published. After several pages of criticism of Carlyle and of the Chartists, the writer said that careful observation of the signs of the times discovers the approach of a crisis as to the relation of wealth and labor, which must be met by those then living or by their children. Politicians, statesmen, and legislators seemed to have no glimpse of the coming contest, though the controversies about United States banks and sub-treasuries, chartered banking and free banking, free trade and corporations might be paving the way for it to come up.

He estimated the workingmen who are dependent solely on their hands as at least a moiety of the human race, excluding the large number of proprietors who are not employers, but laborers on their own lands or in their own shops. It is true that these are not the only producers of wealth; for the merchant who is the carrier and exchange dealer is useful, and is entitled to a share in the proceeds of labor. But after making the necessary deductions on this account, the fact stares us in the

face that the workingman is poor and depressed, while a large proportion of the non-producers grow wealthy. Under every government, the highest salaries are attached to the offices which demand of their incumbents the least amount of actual labor, either mental or manual ; and this is in harmony with the whole system of the repartition of the fruits of industry which obtains in every department of society. The whole class of simple laborers are poor, and in general unable to procure anything beyond the bare necessities of life.

Comparing the two systems of labor for wages and slave labor, the writer thinks the latter the less oppressive, except so far as the feelings are concerned ; and when the slave has never been a free man, his sufferings, as a general rule, are less than those of the free laborer at wages. "As to actual freedom one has just about as much as the other. The laborer at wages has all the disadvantages of freedom and none of its blessings, while the slave, if denied the blessings, is freed from the disadvantages. We are no advocates of slavery, we are as heartily opposed to it as any modern abolitionist can be ; but we say frankly that, if there must always be a laboring population distinct from proprietors and employers, we regard the slave system as decidedly preferable to the system at wages.*

The great work for this age, he contends, and for the next, too, is to raise up the laborer ; as the past has freed the slave, our business is to emancipate the proletariat. Reformers in general would have all men good, and wise, and happy, but through internal, and not external changes. Instead of denouncing or disturbing

* Boston Quarterly Review, vol. iii, p. 368.

existing social arrangements, they seek to make the individual a practical religious man, believing that then all evils will disappear, or be sanctified to the spiritual growth of the soul.

"This is doubtless," he says, "a capital theory, and has the advantage that kings, hierarchies, nobilities,—in a word, all who fatten on the toil and blood of their fellows, will feel no difficulty in supporting it. Nicholas of Russia, the Grand Turk, his Holiness the Pope, will hold us their especial friends for advocating a theory which secures to them the odor of sanctity even while they are sustaining by their anathemas or their armed legions, a system of things of which the great mass are and must be the victims. If you will only allow me to keep thousands toiling for my pleasure or my profit, I will even aid you in your pious efforts to convert their souls. I am not cruel; I do not wish either to cause or to see suffering; I am therefore disposed to encourage your labors for the soul of the workingman, providing you will secure to me the products of his bodily toil. So far as the salvation of his soul will not interfere with my income, I hold it worthy of being sought; and if a few thousand dollars will aid you, Mr. Priest, in reconciling him to God, and making fair weather for him hereafter, they are at your service. I shall not want him to work for me in the world to come, and I can indemnify myself for what your salary costs me, by paying him less wages. A capital theory this, which one may advocate without incurring the reproach of a disorganizer, a jacobin, a leveller, and without losing the friendship of the rankest aristocrat in the land."*

* Ibid. pp. 373-4.

We yield, he says a little further on, "to none in our reverence for science and religion; but we confess we look not for the regeneration of the race from priests and pedagogues. They have had a fair trial. They cannot construct the temple of God. They cannot conceive its plan, and they know not how to build. They daub with untempered mortar, and the walls they erect tumble down if so much as a fox attempt to go up thereon. In a word they always league with the people's masters, and seek to reform without disturbing the social arrangements which render reform necessary. They would change the consequents without changing the antecedents, secure to men the rewards of holiness while they continue their allegiance to the devil. We have no faith in priests and pedagogues. They merely cry peace, peace, and that too when there is no peace, and can be none."*

What is purely individual in its nature, efforts of individuals, to perfect themselves, may remove. But the social evils complained of are not purely individual, arising from the personal characters of either rich or poor, and therefore they cannot be removed by individual effort, saving so far as individual effort induces the combined effort of the mass. But what is the origin of the inequality of men, of the depressed condition of the laboring classes?

"For our part," the writer answers, "we are disposed to seek the cause of the inequalities of which we speak, in religion, and charge it to the priesthood. And we are confirmed in this, by what appears to be the instinctive tendency of every, or almost every, social

* Ibid. p. 375.

reformer. Men's instincts in a matter of this kind, are worthier of reliance than their reasonings. Rarely do we find in any age or country a man feeling himself commissioned to labor for a social reform, who does not feel that he must begin it by making war upon the priesthood. This was the case with the old Hebrew reformers, who are to us the prophets of God; with Jesus, the apostles, and early fathers of church; with the French democrats of the last century; and is the case with the young Germans and the socialists, as they call themselves in England, at the present moment. Indeed it is felt at once that no reform can be effected without resisting the priests and emancipating the people from their power."*

Having traced, at some length and in accordance with the theory he then clung to of the origin of civilization in barbarism,—the inequality, which now prevails, to the priesthood, he proceeds: "Christianity is the sublimest protest against the priesthood ever uttered; and a protest uttered by both God and man; for he who uttered it was God-man. In the person of Jesus both God and man protest against the priesthood. What was the mission of Jesus but a solemn summons of every priesthood on earth to judgment, and of the human race to freedom? He discomfited the learned doctors, and with whips of small cords drove the priests, degenerated into mere money changers, from the temple of God. He instituted himself no priesthood, no form of religious worship. He recognized no priest but a holy life, and commanded the construction of no temple but that of the pure heart. He preached no formal religion, enjoined no creed, set apart no day for religious worship. He

* Ibid. pp. 378-9.

came to the soul enslaved, cabined, cribbed, confined, to the poor child of mortality, bound hand and foot, unable to move, and said in the tones of a God, 'Be free; be enlarged; be there room for thee to grow, expand, and overflow with the love thou wast made to overflow with.'*

"The priest is universally a tyrant, universally the enslaver of his brethren, and therefore it is that christianity condemns him. It could not prevent the reëstablishment of a hierarchy, but it prepared for its ultimate destruction, by denying the inequality of blood, by representing all men as equal before God, and by insisting on the celibacy of the clergy. The best feature of the church was in its denial to the clergy of the right to marry. By this it prevented the new hierarchy from becoming hereditary, as were the old sacerdotal corporations of India and Judea." "It may be supposed that we protestants have no priests; but for ourselves we know no difference between a catholic priest and a protestant clergyman, as we know no difference of any magnitude, in relation to the principles on which they are based, between a protestant church and the catholic church. Both are based on the principle of authority; both deny in fact, however it may be in manner, the authority of reason, and war against freedom of mind; both substitute dead works for true righteousness, a vain show for the reality of piety, and are sustained as the means of reconciling us to God without requiring us to become godlike. Both therefore ought to go by the board." "The word of God never drops from the priest's lips. He who redeemed man did not spring from

Ibid. p. 384.

the priestly class, for it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning the priesthood. Who in fact were the authors of the Bible, the book which Christendom professes to receive as the word of God? The priests? Nay, they were the inveterate foes of the priests. No man ever berated the priests more soundly than did Jeremiah and Ezekiel. And who were they who heard Jesus the most gladly? The priests? The chief priests were at the head of those who demanded his crucifixion. In every age the priests, the authorized teachers of religion, are the first to oppose the true prophet of God, and to condemn his prophecies as blasphemies. They are always a let and a hindrance to the spread of truth. Why then retain them? Why not abolish the priestly office? Why continue to sustain what the whole history of man condemns as the greatest of all obstacles to intellectual and social progress?" "None of your hireling priests, your 'dumb dogs' that will not bark. What are the priests of Christendom as they now are? Miserable panders to the prejudices of the age, loud in condemning sins nobody is guilty of, but silent as the grave when it concerns the crying sin of the times; bold as bold can be when there is no danger, but miserable cowards when it is necessary to speak out for God and outraged humanity. As a body they never preach a truth till there is none whom it will indict. Never do they as a body venture to condemn sin in the concrete, and make each sinner feel 'thou art the man.' When the prophets of God have risen up and proclaimed the word of God, and after persecution and death, led the people to acknowledge it to be the word of God, then your drivelling

priest comes forward, and owns it to be a truth, and cries, 'cursed of God and man is he who believes it not.' But enough. The imbecility of an organized priesthood, of a hireling clergy, for all good, and its power only to demoralise the people and misdirect their energies, is beginning to be seen, and will one day be acknowledged. Men are begining to speak out on this subject, and the day of reckoning is approaching. The people are rising up and asking of these priests whom they have fed, clothed, honored, and followed, What have ye done for the poor and friendless, to destroy oppression, and establish the Kingdom of God on earth? A fearful question for you, O ye priests, which we leave you to answer as best ye may."*

The next step, after the overthrow of the priesthood, was to be the introduction of the pure christianity of Christ, which he interpreted to be the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, bringing down the high and bringing up the low, breaking the fetters of the bound and setting the captive free, destroying all oppression and establishing the reign of justice (i. e. equality), so that every man have scope to unfold himself and grow up into the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. Having by means of this pure christianity directed all minds to social reform and quickened in all souls the moral power to live or die for it, the third step was to be resort to legislative enactments. There has been too much government, as well as bad government. Government must begin by circumscribing its power within narrower limits, next repeal all laws which bear against the laboring classes, and then enact such laws as are

* Ibid, p. 387.

necessary to enable them to maintain their equality. The first legislation wanted was such as would free the state and federal governments from the control of the banks and secure the destruction of the latter. Then all privilege and monopoly should be abolished, hereditary descent of property with the rest. "And is this a measure to be easily carried? Not at all. It will cost infinitely more than it cost to abolish either hereditary monarchy or hereditary nobility. It is a great measure and a startling. The rich, the business community, will never voluntarily consent to it, and we think we know too much of human nature to believe that it will ever be effected peaceably. It will be effected only by the strong arm of physical force. It will come, if it ever come at all, only at the conclusion of war, the like of which the world as yet has never witnessed, and from which, however inevitable it may seem to the eye of philosophy, the heart of humanity recoils with horror. We are not ready for this measure yet. There is much previous work to be done, and we should be the last to bring it before the legislature. The time, however, has come for its free and full discussion. It must be canvassed in the public mind, and society prepared for acting on it. No doubt they who broach it, and especially they who support it, will experience a due share of contumely and abuse." In a note to this part of the article, the writer says : " I am entitled to no favor, and I ask as I expect none. But I am not so unfortunate as to be wholly without friends in this world. Their reputations are dear to me. For their sake I add this note, that they may not be in the least censured for the fact that one whom they have honored with their friendship, and in a journal which in its general

character they have not hesitated to commend, has seen proper to put forth a doctrine which, to say the least, for long years to come must be condemned almost unanimously." *

The writer's expectations were fully realized. Some few saw him enter the arena with such fearful odds against him and throw down the gauntlet so boldly, with mixed admiration and apprehension; and Brownson himself seemed to feel a proud consciousness of the free spirit that dares say plainly and openly what it believes true and right, at every peril. Mankind has been likened to an ass that kicks him who would take off his panniers, and it has been asserted that when he was ready to have them removed he would take them off himself. But this is certain, that he who sees the poor creature sinking under the weight of his burden and attempts to remove it, at the sacrifice of himself, belongs to the very highest order of humanity, and he is lost to all that is elevated who would not admire the spirit, and appreciate it. One of his friends, with much seemingly good sense, wrote to him:

"After reading your article on the laboring classes, though, as I told you, I admired the style, and agreed to most of the sentiments expressed in it; these feelings were at the same time more than counterbalanced by the pain I felt in knowing that your coming out thus boldly and fearlessly with the most startling propositions, and bringing all your battering engines against the enemy's wall, that is, their most cherished prejudices, would draw upon yourself the whole force of the opposition, and perhaps even a defeat,—while those who mine, under-

* Ibid. p. 394.

mine, and mask their batteries, will gain the honors of the victory (granting a victory). To this I am, and shall be, unreconciled. I think some three or four of my friends are taking advantage of the 'man of the world,* and I like a balance of power. You will tell me that it is more noble to be a martyr,—and I will tell you that it is not, when we can accomplish the same end by other means,—that martyrdom is the last resort, and there are other means you have not tried, and then you will say something furious, and then we shall both get in a passion, and then get—over it. I am aware that I am treading on dangerous ground, that is, on ground somewhat volcanic that will be quite likely to explode and, in vulgar phrase, *blow me up.*" †

But the country at large was far from being so lenient to what it called "Horrible Doctrines," and their advocate was denounced as an agrarian, a Jacobin, and the American Robespierre. The Whigs sought to make political capital out of them, and the Democrats condemned them the more earnestly from fear of being held responsible for them.

Brownson had adopted the general rule of not replying to anything written or said against himself personally, or the views put forth by him from time to time; because in what he wrote he was not seeking for fame or personal reputation, nor so desirous of establishing his opinions as of stimulating inquiry and eliciting the truth. He threw his opinions out freely, leaving them to be discussed, confident that what was true in them

* The writer of the letter used to say that there were half a dozen persons in Brownson, the man of the world, the preacher, the philosopher, the reformer, etc.

† Letter of Anne C. Lynch, July 24, 1840.

would live, and unwilling that anything more of them should survive. On this occasion, for the purpose of giving his views with fuller details, he departed from this rule and replied at some length to the principal objections urged against the article on the Laboring Classes. His replied was published in the Boston Quarterly Review for October, 1840.

One objection had been made that this was not the time for putting forth those doctrines, because they bring reproach upon him who utters them, because the public will not understand them, and because there are more important matters for discussion.

That they bring reproach on him, he replies, is purely a personal matter, with which the public has no concern. That the public is not prepared to understand them, no man can tell until he has published them; but it is a safe rule for a man to infer that what he can fully comprehend himself, may be communicated to his contemporaries. That there were more important matters for discussion, he did not believe. Each one must judge for himself. He judged the proper time to bring out a doctrine, was when one clearly perceives it, and is convinced of its truth and importance, and feels it pressing for utterance.

To the objection that he would abolish Christianity, he answers that he holds the Christianity of the church in low esteem, and the sooner it is abolished the better. But he claims the right to interpret Christianity for himself, and distinctly avows his belief in the divine inspiration of the Old and New Testaments. Why he would abolish the priesthood, he explains in these words :

“The mission of Jesus was twofold. One purpose of his mission was to atone for sin, and prepare the soul for heaven in the world to come. The other purpose was to found a holy kingdom on the earth, under the dominion of which all men should finally be brought. This last purpose is the only one which concerns us in our present inquiry.

“This holy kingdom, which Christ came to found on the earth, has been mistaken for the outward, visible church; and the church has therefore been held to be a spiritual body, a body corporate, independent in itself, and distinct from the body politic, civil society, or the state. This has given rise to a double organization of mankind; one for material interests called the state, and under the control of the civil government proper; the other for spiritual purposes, called the church, and governed by laws and officers of its own, distinct from those of the state.

“Now to this we strenuously object. We would establish the kingdom of God on the earth; but we would not have a *double* organization of mankind. We would have but a single organization; and this organization we would call not the church, but the state. This organization should be based on the principles of the gospel, and realize them as perfectly as finite man can realize them.

“The kingdom of God is an inward, spiritual kingdom. In plain language, it is the dominion of truth, justice, and love. Now, we would build up this kingdom not by founding an outward visible church, but by cultivating the principles of truth, justice, and love in the soul of the individual, and by bringing society and all its acts

into perfect harmony with them. Our views, if carried out, would realize not a union, but the unity, the identity, of church and state. They would indeed destroy the church as a *separate* body, as a distinct organization; but they would do it by transferring to the state the moral ideas on which the church was professedly founded, and which it has failed to realize. They would realize the idea of a 'Christian Commonwealth,' after which our puritan fathers so earnestly and perseveringly struggled. They are nothing but the views of the first settlers of this state, developed and systematized, and freed from the theological phraseology in which they were then expressed. We are true to their idea, to their spirit, and are laboring to realize that which they most desired. We therefore remind those who profess to reverence our puritan ancestors, that they would do well to study the history and opinions of those ancestors, and forbear to censure us till they are prepared to condemn them."*

Religious worship he contended for; but he called the Sunday exercises only preparations or aids to worship; the real worship, he maintained after St. James, was to recall the erring, enlighten the ignorant, comfort the sorrowing, heal the broken-hearted, raise up the down-trodden, and set at liberty them that are bound, in a word, to redress all individual and social wrongs, and to establish in our own hearts and in society at large the reign of truth, justice, and love.

As to the priesthood, in the sense of a mediator between man and God, he held that one mediator, Christ Jesus, is enough; in the sense of teachers or ministers

* Boston Quarterly Review, October, 1840, pp. 437-8. This was no new notion of the writer. He had published it more than two years previously.

of the gospel, he would have more, not fewer; more preaching, not less; and more religious congregations. His war was against making the preaching of the gospel a trade, a business, from which a numerous class were to derive their revenues.

In this connection he contends from scripture that under the new covenant all men are called to be kings and priests. In the next place, it is impossible for any man faithfully and honestly to fulfil the requirements of the clerical profession. One cannot but smile at the simplicity which exacts fifty or a hundred, and sometimes a hundred and fifty sermons in a year for thirty, forty or fifty years in succession; at times too when general intelligence advances so rapidly that it requires no small effort on the part of the clergyman to keep pace with it. In the third place, he held that no man had a right to preach unless called by the Holy Ghost, and only when moved by the spirit of God. Now, it is no lack of charity to say that, in a vast majority of cases, the Holy Ghost has no agency in the matter; or if, at one period in the life of the individual clergyman, he had shed down some hallowing influence, he has long since been grieved, and withheld it. "The truth is," he writes, "and there is no use in denying it, that the greater portion of those who enter the ministry, enter it not because they believe that they have any special vocation thereto, but because it promises them a respectable means of living; or because their parents or friends have insisted upon their entering it." "Now, what has the spirit of God to do with all this? Follow the licentiate into the pulpit, listen to his sermons, and what hear you? A man speaking with a living voice, out of his own full heart, and from his own

earnest convictions, great and kindling truths, burning from the primal source of truth itself? No; you hear a dull, wheezy drone, from which you are fain to take refuge in your own thoughts, or in sleep; or you hear a parrot repeating what some dull professor has beaten into him. Blaspheme not, we pray you, the Holy Ghost, by saying that this talking automaton is of his calling." *

In the fourth place, the clergyman is dependent on his congregation for the means of living, and must either preach to suit his people, or be sullied in reputation and sent supperless to bed. The nearest approach to Brownson's view of the church and the ministry was found in the idea of the Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers.

Another objection to the article on the laboring classes, declared that the account of their condition was exaggerated and false. In the course of the defence of that account, the writer says: "We have conversed with many intelligent mechanics of this city who have resided at the South, and they all with one voice sustain the view we have here given. They all tell us that, if the present condition of the laborer here must remain for ever, they should regard it as worse than that of the Southern slave.

"Why is it, we would ask, that so few of the real workingmen here are abolitionists? Why do they interest themselves so little in the freedom of the negro slave? It is because they feel that they themselves are virtually slaves while marked with the name of freemen, and that the movements in behalf of freedom should be first directed towards their emancipation. With them we

* Ibid. pp. 448-9.

find friends and supporters in the course we take, and we become endeared to them just in proportion as the upper classes condemn us; for they feel the truth of what we say.

“ We know that the law declares these workingmen equal to any other members of society and the body politic; but what avails the declaration of the law, when those in whose favor it is cannot take advantage of it? What avails the theoretic recognition of their rights, when they want the power to make them recognized in fact? Nor, in truth, is the law so impartial as it would seem. The laws of this commonwealth, as interpreted by the courts, allow, we believe, the employer to inflict corporal punishment on the employed. In the State of New York, laborers have been fined and imprisoned for refusing to work at the wages offered them; or rather, for agreeing together not to sell their labor unless at a higher price than they had hitherto been paid. Yet manufacturers, flour dealers, physicians, and lawyers may band together on the same principle, for a similar end, form their trades unions, and no law is violated. A rich man may get drunk in a gentlemanly way in his own house, and be carried by his servants to his bed, and the law is silent, while the poor man who has taken a glass too much and is seen intoxicated, shall be fined, or imprisoned, or both. A man who belongs to the upper classes may be an habitual drunkard, and the law shall not interfere; but if a poor man is convicted of habitual drunkenness, he shall be sent to the House of Correction. A poor man accused of a crime is convicted in advance,—for he is poor,—and is pretty sure to be

punished. A rich man accused, and convicted even, is pretty sure to get rid of the punishment.

“Our penal code bears with peculiar severity on the poor. In numerous cases the punishment is fine or imprisonment. Now, in all these cases, the poor alone are really punished. The rich man, if guilty, can easily pay the fine without feeling it; the poor can rarely pay the fine, and if they do, it is generally by surrendering all they have, and by drawing some months in advance on their labor; in which case, the punishment of a fine of twenty dollars falls as heavy on the poor man as a fine of as many hundreds would on a rich man. But generally the poor man cannot pay his fine, and consequently must be imprisoned three or six months for an offence from which a rich man may get clear by paying five, ten, or twenty dollars out of his superfluity. This too in a land of equal laws.

“Then again the administration of justice is so expensive that the poor man is rarely able to resort to it. It costs too much. Is he injured in his person? He must give security for the expenses of the court, before he can have even the process for his redress commence. Are his wages withheld? It will cost him more to compel their payment, even if successful, which he can rarely count on being, than they amount to. He must pocket the insults offered him, and abandon his righteous claims when not freely allowed. *

* “A calculation was made in the State of New York a few years since, by which it was shown that the expenses attending the legal collection of debts,—taking the state at large,—amounted to more than the debts collected. In making this estimate, the loss of time, interruption of business to both parties, and to witnesses, must be taken into account, as well as the mere legal costs of suits.

“We add one item here, not added in the next, to prove the slavery of the proletaries. The great mass of these are more or less in debt to the

“Is a poor man suspected of some crime, although innocent, and it shall turn out that he is innocent, he is forthwith arrested and shut up in jail, where he must wait two, three, four, six months, or longer, for a trial. It is not long since a poor sailor died in the hospital where we are now writing, who had been kept in close confinement for nine months or more, on a charge of mutiny which charge the court declared unfounded. The poor fellow's time was lost, a robust constitution was broken down, and he merely passed from the prison to the hospital to die. But had he lived, what remuneration would he have received from society for the wrong done him? But a rich man, when arrested, can in most cases find bail, and be at liberty and about his business, till the trial comes on. But who will bail the poor man? The poor man's time, too, is valuable to him. His labors are necessary to the support of his family. But this is nothing. ‘He is cast into prison without any care for his infirm old mother, for his wife, or his children. There, in that prison, in the midst of what a corrupt society has of the most unclean and perverse, he counts painfully the days which separate him from his family. He represents to himself their tears, their sufferings, their anguish; he hears during the night, in the fever of his half-sleep, each one of them cry, I am hungry!’* ”

capitalists, or employer class. This tells the whole story. The man who is in debt is a slave, and can no longer meet his creditor on terms of equality. He must submit to all the insults offered him. The feeling on this subject is expressed by a not unfrequent remark made by a poor man when insulted by some purse-proud neighbor. ‘I will pay him what I owe him and then I'll give him a piece of my mind!’ Then, imprisonment for debt is by no means abolished in any state of the Union. There is not a poor debtor in this commonwealth whom his creditor cannot send to jail tomorrow, and lock him up too with felons.”

* “Abbé de la Mennais, *L'Esclavage Moderne*.”

“ But we can pursue this subject no further at present. What we have said may suffice to show that we could, were we disposed, say somewhat in defence of the account we gave of the condition of the laboring classes. But we forbear. And for our forbearance, our conservative brethren are our debtors. Were we desirous of stirring up the wrath of the laboring classes, as they say we are, they would find us speaking in somewhat other tones, and making an appeal which would be responded to from every section of our country, in no soft, lulling strains, but with one loud burst of indignation, which should ring, as a summons to the last judgment, on the heart of every man who would lord it over his brother. But we delight not in such appeals ; our ears have no pleasure in such responses. We would, if we could, unloose no angry passion. We see society as it is. We see whence it has become what it is. It is the growth of ages. No one man, and no class of men now living are wholly responsible for its vices. All classes are victims of systems and organizations which have come down to us from the past. We know not in reality who suffer the most by the present order of things. If we deplore the condition of the laborer, we by no means envy that of the capitalist. We know not, indeed which most to pity. All are sufferers. The cry of distress comes to us from all classes of society. All are in a false position ; all are out of their true position as free, high-minded, virtuous men. And instead of weeping or criminating, we would call upon all, whether high or low, rich or poor, to look at things as they are, and set themselves at work in earnest, and in good faith, to ascertain the remedy needed, and to apply it.” *

* Boston Quarterly Review, October, 1840, pp. 468-472,

Finally, in defence of the suggestion of the abolition of hereditary descent of property, Brownson shows that the great evil of all modern society is the division of the community into two classes, one of which, the capitalists, own the funds, and the other perform the labor of production. This division, he foresaw would grow wider and wider every year, and though, at the time when he was writing, the condition of the proletary population was altogether superior here to what it was in any other country of the civilized world ; yet causes were at work which must before long reproduce in this country the same state of things in relation to the laboring classes with that which gangrenes English society.

One set of reformers propose for remedy free trade and universal suffrage ; the other set, education and religious culture. All good, so far as they went, he said ; but these are only palliatives, which may conceal the sore and alleviate the pain, but not heal it. A more radical measure is wanted.

The democratic party declared itself "the party of equality against privilege." Hereditary property is a privilege, and therefore should be abolished. All the members of the community should have, so far as society is concerned, equal chances. Equal chances imply equal starting points, The young man inheriting a fortune does not start equal with him whose inheritance is the gutter. If hereditary distinction, or distinction founded on birth is admitted, why limit it to property ? and why not have hereditary magistrates, professors, priests, legislators, governors, and president ?

An individual may rise from the proletary to the proprietor class, only by using the laboring class as the

lever of his elevation ; the class cannot rise. It is, then, a mere logical conclusion from the admitted premises of the democratic party, as indeed from those of the American theory of government and society, that all artificial distinctions, all social advantages, founded on birth or any other accident, should be abolished, and every man left to stand on his own feet, for precisely what God and nature have made him. The ownership of property is a natural right, so far as civil society is concerned, existing independently of all civil government ; but the right to transmit property after one's death is not a natural right, but is a privilege conferred by civil enactment.

The Christian clergy contend, it is true, that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," and men are merely his stewards; but this doctrine concerns only the individual conscience ; before society the ownership is as incontestable as the title of a trustee in a court of common law. The origin of the right of property is differently placed by those who have discussed it. The jurists generally make the right a creature of political and civil institutions ; but some jurists and most philosophers base the right on first, or original occupancy. A third theory founds the right of property on formation, creation, production.

This third theory is unquestionably correct, as far as it goes. The creator owns his creature, and a man has a natural right to call that his, which he himself, by his own labor, has created. But this is not all the property to which he has a natural right.

That the right of property is the creature of the state, is so far true that all must admit that the law gives a good enough title to property ; but the law is not

ultimate, and property is not the creature of political and civil institutions, so that society may declare what it will to be property and adopt what rule of distribution or transmission it pleases. Society is under law, and is as much bound to consult the right as is the meanest individual, and has no right to enact what is not in accordance with the law of nature, or the will of God.

The right of property based on first or original occupation of a thing or a spot of land gives the first occupant a valid title to what he occupies against every one who would dispossess him, provided that his occupancy be not a prejudice to another who has equal claims with himself; that is to say, the right of the first occupant is limited by a right more ultimate still.

To render this plain, the writer says : " Man's right to the earth, to possess it, to cultivate it, and enjoy its fruits, is divine, and rests on the will of the Creator. The evidences of this are in the Bible, in man's constitution, in the simple fact, that man is placed here under circumstances which render his possession of the earth indispensable to his very subsistence. God gave the earth to the children of men. All admit this. But writers on this subject tell us that he gave it to them as common property.

" This last we deny. We recognize no such thing as *common* property. The very essence of property is individual, peculiar, exclusive. The Creator has made man with an original, an innate sense of property. We see man everywhere appropriating something to himself, and calling it his own. The ideas of *mine* and *thine* are among the earliest developed in the human mind. Now, by creating man with this innate sense of property, and

endowing him with faculties for its acquisition, the Creator has plainly declared it his will that man should possess property. 'Man,' says Chancellor Kent, 'was fitted and intended by the author of his being for society and government, and for the acquisition and enjoyment of property.' 'The sense of property is inherent in the human breast.'* We may, therefore, lay it down as established, or admitted, that man was created, not to hold property in common, but to hold individual property, as something which he might call his own, and of which no individual, nor society even, could rightfully dispossess him.

"Our inference from this is not that the earth was given to mankind, as a common property, but as an inheritance, to be possessed by each as individual property. The question then comes up, in what proportions shall it be possessed? That is, to how much was any one individual entitled, for his share of the general inheritance? To answer this question, it is simply necessary to ascertain what is the relation which men bear towards one another before their maker and what relation they ought to bear towards one another before society. Christianity answers the first and democracy the second. As we in this country profess to be Christians and Democrats, the answers of these are sufficiently ultimate for our present purpose.

"According to Christianity, all men are equal before God. This is the great truth Christianity has placed in the world, and it is the glory of the church, that even in the times of its grossest corruption it has always maintained this truth. God has made of one blood all the nations of men. The church, therefore, in its theory,

* 1. Kent's Com., vol. ii, p. 318.

has admitted no distinction of race, of bond or free, of rich or poor, and has ordered the same discipline to prince and peasant, and read the same solemn service over their ashes. Democracy, the creature of this truth, or indebted to the activity of this truth for its development, declares that all men are equal in their rights, that man measures man the world over.

“Now, if all men are equal before God, if God be no respecter of persons, then he must have designed the earth to be possessed by them in equal portions; and if as democracy asserts, all men have equal rights, then it follows, that all have a right to equal portions. That is to say, according to both Christianity and democracy, every man had a right of property to a portion of the whole equal to that of every other man. Divide the whole by the number of men, and the quotient will be the amount which each might call his own.

“This is the abstract right of property to the earth as God gave it to man, and this is the right which limits the right of the first occupant. Original occupancy gives to the first occupant a right of property in this particular thing, or this particular spot, in preference to that, provided the claim thus acquired do not stretch over more than in an equal division of the whole would have fallen to the occupant's share. With this limitation, we admit the right of the first occupant, and that occupancy is not only the original, but a valid title to property.

“Speaking strictly, and keeping in view the limitations we have made, man has a right of property, 1. To that of which he is the original occupant; 2. To that which he by his own labor has produced, with or without the aid of the funds of production rightfully held; and

3. To that which society by law appropriates to him. This last title may not be good in morals, but is in general good against society itself, so far, at least, as concerns the present proprietor ; for society has seldom the right to revoke its grants. The expectations it has itself formally and deliberately created, it is bound to satisfy."*

Having thus settled what is property and to how much a man may have a good title, Brownson proceeds to inquire the extent of that title ; whether it is unlimited or has a natural term of expiration. He finds the authorities he consulted, Kent and Blackstone,† agreeing that the natural right of property ceases with the death of the owner. Jefferson,‡ Mirabeau,§ and MM. Portalis, Tronchet, Bigot-Prémeneu, and Malleville in their preliminary discourse to the *projet du code civile* presented to the government, 24 Thermidor, An vii, say the same. Locke, who derives the right of property from the primitive contract, must, of course, admit it to be alterable with the consent of the contracting parties ; and Bentham and others who found it in civil enactment, thereby denying, as does Locke, all natural right of property, cannot maintain that the owner has a natural right to transmit his property to heirs, devisees, or legatees. Montesquieu and Pascal maintained the doctrine of Blackstone and Jefferson, that at the owner's death his property reverts to society, or becomes *publici juris* once

* Boston Quarterly Review, October 1840, pp. 484-6.

† 1 Kent's Com. 325 ; 2 Blackstone's Com. 10-13.

‡ Letter to Mr. Madison, dated Paris, Sept. 6, 1789, in *Memoir, Correspondence &c.* Edited by T. J. Randolph, Vol. iii, p. 27.

§ " Discours de Mirabeau sur l'Egalité des partages dans les successions en ligne directe. Prononcé après sa mort, par l'évêque d'Antun, M. le prince Talleyrand à l'Assemblée Nationale."

more. All legislation recognizes that children and other relatives have no natural right to inherit property, when it grants the owner power to dispose of his property by will or testament.

The proposition in the article on the laboring classes which gave so much offence, was, that a man's power over his property must cease with his life, and his property then becomes the property of the state, to be disposed of by some equitable law, for the use of the generation which takes his place. Jefferson says, "the portion occupied by any individual ceases to be his when he himself ceases to be, and reverts to society:" merely declaring the natural law on the subject, and Brownson simply adds that the actual arrangements of society should be conformed to that law. This is all the difference in principle there is between them.

Common property having been shown to be a solecism, the individuals of whom the society is composed have a right to possess in severalty the property reverting to society. If a whole generation died off at once and were replaced by an entire new generation, the new generation would unquestionably have the right to enter upon and appropriate the property in equal shares. The principle on which the whole should be reappropriated were the whole vacated at once, should determine how those portions daily and hourly becoming vacant should be entered upon. This rule is the rule of equality. "If there be any force," the writer says, "in the considerations we have presented, we have demonstrated that, according to natural law, a man has no right over the property he possesses, any longer than he lives; that his children have no natural right to inherit his estate, and stand in

relation to it precisely as the children of a stranger ; and furthermore, that the property vacated by the death of its former owner, the individual members of society hold not as common property, but in severalty, and in equal shares. If we have demonstrated thus much, we have demonstrated all we undertook to demonstrate, we have shown that our proposition to abolish hereditary property and to dispose of it by some equitable law for the use of the new generation, is founded in natural right, and it is demanded by the law of natural justice." *

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LOWELL OPERATIVES.—THE LABORING CLASSES.—THE WORKINGMEN'S ADDRESS.

ANOTHER little spat, growing out of the article on the Laboring Classes, was with the factory operatives of Lowell, and although merely a comparatively small number of persons were then employed in the mills in the manufacturing towns, the subject involved in the discussion was one of momentous concern to the whole American people.

The factory system had been, through the combined influence of paper currency and protective tariffs, fastened upon the country, and the manufacturing interest, coupled as it was with that of internal improvements, and to some extent, singular as it may seem, with the commercial interest, had become very nearly, if not

* Ibid. p. 494.

quite, the ruling system of the country, that to which the whole political action and financial policy of the Union were forced to be subservient. It was every day fortifying itself, and was already so strong that no party promising itself success throughout the Union, durst array itself against it. The system was not only fastened upon the country, was not only already a ruling interest, but it was every day extending itself, and was drawing within its operation a larger and still larger proportion of our population.

Nothing, then, could be more important than inquiries into the operation of this system on the morals and health and general well-being of the factory population. Humanity is interested in the morals, the health, and the well-being of every one of her members, and those of a factory operative may be as dear to her universal heart as the morals, health, and well-being of the factory owners.

In 1839, some papers appeared in the Boston Times making astounding disclosures in regard to the morals of the operatives in the Lowell mills. These papers were replied to in a Lowell journal by Dr. Elisha Bartlett, who had been mayor of the city; but in so feeble a manner that he seemed rather to confirm than to refute the statements made in the Boston Times. In the article on the Laboring Classes in the July following. Brownson took occasion to allude in general terms to the operation of the factory system. "We pass through our manufacturing villages," says the writer, "most of them appear neat and flourishing. The operatives are well dressed, and we are told, well paid. They are said to be healthy, contented, and happy. This is the fair

side of the picture ; the side exhibited to distinguished visitors. There is a dark side, moral as well as physical. Of the common operatives few, if any, by their wages acquire a competence. A few of what Carlyle terms not inaptly the *body servants* are well paid, and now and then an agent or an overseer rides in his coach. But the great mass wear out their health, spirits, and morals, without becoming one whit better off than when they commenced labor. The bills of mortality in these factory villages are not striking, we admit, for the poor girls when they can toil no longer go home to die. The average life, working life we mean, of the girls that come to Lowell, for instance, from Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, we have been assured is only about three years. What becomes of them then ? Few of them ever marry ; fewer still ever return to their native places with reputations unimpaired. 'She has worked in a factory,' is almost enough to damn to infamy the most worthy and virtuous girl. We know no sadder sight on earth than one of our factory villages presents when the bell at break of day, or at the hour of breakfast or dinner, calls out its hundreds, or thousands of operatives. We stand and look at these hard-working men and women hurrying in all directions, and ask ourselves, where go the proceeds of their labors ? The man who employs them, and for whom they are toiling as so many slaves, is one of our city nabobs, revelling in luxury ; or he is a member of our legislature, enacting laws to put money in his own pocket ; or he is a member of Congress contending for a high tariff to tax the poor for the benefit of the rich ; or, in these times, he is shedding crocodile tears over the deplorable condition of the poor laborer while he docks

his wages twenty-five per cent.; building miniature log-cabins, shouting Harrison and 'hard cider.' And this man too would fain pass for a Christian and a republican. He shouts for liberty, stickles for equality, and is horrified at a southern planter who keeps slaves." *

This passage, as might have been expected, made by one who knew very well that whereof he affirmed, whose circumstances in life and whose professional duties had made him but too well acquainted with the workings of the factory system, created no little alarm among the corporators, and from which they could save themselves only by converting it into an attack, not on the factory system and the corporations, but on the poor operatives themselves. To obviate the force of this, two or three factory girls were induced through misrepresentation, to reply to the editor of the Boston Quarterly Review. But their hostility was soon disarmed by Brownson's letter to them in explanation of the passage they had misrepresented. He wrote:

"BOSTON, March 24, 1841.

"*To the Editors of 'The Lowell Offering.'*

"Ladies,—I have received the first and second numbers of your periodical, for which I beg you to accept my thanks. Your paper is conducted with spirit and ability, and I read it with pleasure. I am particularly interested in it, for I am told it is written entirely by girls employed in the mills. It is highly creditable to their talents and taste, and may turn out to be of no slight advantage to them.

* Boston Quarterly Review, July 1840, pp. 369. 370.

“ I perceive, ladies, that you labor under a slight mistake in regard to me. You seem to have taken it into your heads that I am hostile to you and have slandered you. If I may be allowed to be my own interpreter, I have had no thought of speaking disrespectfully of you. My sympathies are with the laboring classes, and I have done what I could to ameliorate the condition of both workingmen and workingwomen. I have been an operative myself for no small portion of my life; I have no sympathies with the aristocracy; I have burned with indignation at the injustice done to those who are obliged to support themselves by their own labor; and this indignation I have expressed as best I could; and for expressing it I have fallen under the condemnation of your masters and employers. This alone, it would seem, should be sufficient to satisfy you that I have had no intention of slandering you.

“ The passage which has offended you I think you must have misinterpreted. I have said nothing against you; I have merely spoken of the injustice the world does you; and I have represented that injustice as great enough to ‘damn to infamy’ the most worthy and virtuous girl, if she be a factory girl. Now it may be possible that the feeling I have spoken of is not as strong as I have represented it; but if you will read the article in which my remark appears you will perceive, I think, that my object was to rebuke your employers and the community generally, not to speak ill of you.

“ My offence consists solely in saying that there is in the community an unjust prejudice against girls employed in factories. Is not this true? That there is a prejudice against you I know, and that it is *unjust* I

have not a doubt. You are, in my judgment, every way equal to the daughters of your employers, and far more useful to the community. Will those daughters treat you as equals? Do they invite you to their parties? and would their brothers be willing to select their wives from your midst, providing always, that you were willing to accept them for your husbands?

“There is no need of words on this subject. I know, and so do you, that you cannot assume that rank in society as factory girls which you could as daughters of factory owners. Moreover, in most places, you know the factory population forms a population by itself. In most factory villages in which I have been acquainted, I have found that portion of the population not employed in factories, looking down on the operatives in the mills. I have rarely known a young man, not employed in a factory, choosing a factory girl for his wife; and I know well the strong prejudice that is felt by operatives in other employments against those in factories. You cannot, as a general rule, return to your earlier homes, after having spent several years in the mills, without being made to feel, that the phrase ‘factory girl’ has a meaning not the most pleasant.

“You yourselves admit, in the article in which you give me so severe a lecture, that there is a prejudice against you, though you contend that it is less than it was. I shall be happy to find it less.

“I have asserted the existence of this prejudice, and condemned it. I have never charged it to you or your fault, nor have I ever so regarded it. I charge it to the factory system. I am opposed to that system, and opposed

to it, among other reasons, because it subjects you to the prejudice of which I have spoken.

“Now, my good friends, what sin have I committed against you and your sisters? I have represented you as suffering from the workings of an iniquitous system; I have condemned that system, and asked that you should be better rewarded for your labors. Is this wrong? I have asked for you a social position equal to that of the wives and daughters of factory owners; is this wrong? Is this to prove myself hostile to you? I have condemned those who grow rich by your labors while your wages are not enough to enrich you. And is this hostility to factory girls?

“No, I have confidence in your good sense, and your love of justice. You have not understood my language in the sense I used it; but have understood it in the sense given it by those who would prejudice you against me, because they fear that, if I am not rendered odious to the community, I may do something to prevent them from fattening on your labors. My enemies are your enemies; and, believe me, they laugh right merrily at your simplicity in condemning me. They would, if they could, prejudice you against every man who has the good sense and the firmness to speak out for the laborer. You may believe them rather than me; but you should remember that I have no interest in prejudicing you against them; while they have a strong interest in prejudicing you against me.

“I am contending for a social reform; I would put the ‘plough into the hand of the owner,’ and also the spindle and the loom. Your employers do not wish for this change. I wish you, the operatives, to be not only

operatives but owners. For this I am laboring. Do you not see then that I am laboring for you against your employers? Do not then be caught in their trap. Do not war for your natural enemies against your friends.

"But I am wearying your patience. I have addressed you this letter because I perceived that you felt yourselves wronged, and that I had wronged you. You were entitled to demand of me an explanation. I believe you wronged, deeply wronged; but not by me; for I have merely stated and condemned the wrong which others do you.

"I will merely add, that touching the morals of factory girls I have rarely spoken. I saw some publications in a Boston newspaper some time since, concerning the girls employed in the mills at Lowell. Those publications were not to your credit; and what is worse, they remain to this day uncontradicted. The feeble attempt of a Lowell paper to contradict merely tended to confirm them. For my own part, I have no reason for believing the morals of factory operatives are materially different from those of the rest of the community; and certainly because some may be bad, I am not the man to infer that all are. With the population of New England factory villages I have had some acquaintance, and I have known individuals employed as operatives in the mills, to whose morals I could bear a cheerful and an honorable testimony.

"You, ladies, have demanded of me an answer, I have given it; and beg leave to subscribe myself,

"Yours very respectfully,

"EDITOR OF THE BOSTON QUARTERLY REVIEW."

Failing in the attempt to form an alliance with the Lowell factory girls, the mill owners had recourse again to Dr. Bartlett, who republished his reply to the papers in the Boston Times, and accompanied it with notes intended to meet the charges contained in the Boston Quarterly.* The author was well acquainted with Brownson, and knew perfectly well that the editor of the Boston Quarterly was making no attack upon the operatives, and that he alluded to their condition solely for the purpose of pointing out the evils under which the laboring classes were suffering ; and he also knew that his own pamphlet was not a vindication nor an intended vindication of the operatives, but of the corporations, of the employers, the class really implicated in the charges. Instead of stating his case truly and openly, and avowedly arguing the real question at issue, Dr. Bartlett's "Vindication" was a misrepresentation of the question at issue in the very outset that was enough to cast suspicion on all his subsequent statements, because it assumed that the attacks which had been made, had been made on the *operatives*, and he appeared as the vindicator of the operatives.

Bartlett's pamphlet provoked a reply† and a general inquiry into the condition of the operatives in our factories. It was written with very considerable ability, with great fairness and candor, and evidently by one whose statements were worthy of great reliance. He

* A Vindication of the Character and Condition of the Females employed in the Lowell mills, against the charges contained in The Boston Times, and the Boston Quarterly Review, by Elisha Bartlett, M. D., Lowell, 1841, 8vo. pp. 26.

† Corporations and Operatives : Being an Exposition of the Condition of Factory Operatives, and a Review of the "Vindication" by Elisha Bartlett, M. D., published at Lowell. 1841, by a Citizen of Lowell. Lowell, Samuel J. Varney, 8vo. pp. 72.

showed very conclusively that Bartlett had failed to make out his case, and that he had by no means succeeded in vindicating the factory system against the charges he undertook to refute. And so ended the Lowell factory war.

Brownson was not much ruffled as a general thing, by the newspaper and pamphlet attacks on him and in defence of hereditary property. Of one* he wrote: "We have read the pamphlet very attentively, but we have not been able to ascertain on what ground the author objects to us; so we cannot say whether we are refuted or not. We must therefore be excused from attempting any reply. But" he continues, "we seize this occasion to say a word or two in explanation of the position we choose to occupy in regard to the doctrine of hereditary property. The community has been apparently not a little alarmed by our speculations. Their alarm, were we not of a serious make, would afford us much amusement, and perhaps has afforded us some; but now that the clamor raised against us has died into an echo, we hasten to say that it was wholly uncalled for. We never brought forward the abolition of hereditary property for the *adoption* of the community, but for its *discussion*. In considering the various means which were necessary for the real elevation of the laboring classes, we suggested that it would ultimately be found necessary to proceed to the length of abolishing hereditary property, as had already been done in regard to hereditary monarchy, and hereditary nobility. We have as yet seen no very cogent reason assigned to show that we were

* Hereditary property justified, Reply to Brownson's Articles on the Laboring Classes. Cambridge: Metcalf, Torrey and Ballou, 1841, 8vo. pp. 51.

wrong. We still believe that the equality which many of our democrats are contending for can be effected by no measure less searching and radical. But we knew well that these democrats would in general shrink from it; and one reason we had for suggesting the measure was to show that the real elevation of the laboring classes was a work they were by no means prepared for. We were willing to expose their cant and hypocrisy by showing them that they had by no means the nerve to look any measure in the face, sufficiently strong to effect the object they professed to have at heart. But we knew the measure could not be adopted at present, if ever; and therefore we never proposed to ourselves to embark in the quixotic enterprise of attempting to secure its adoption. We stated at the time, that we did not propose it for adoption, that the time had not come for its adoption, and that we would be the last to bring it before the legislature. We therefore threw it out, as we said, merely for discussion; confident that its discussion could do no harm, and also that discussion would raise it up, in the long run, friends and champions. In this way we thought possibly it might after a series of ages come to be adopted. We have accomplished the purpose we had in view in bringing it forward; we have placed it before the public; made it a subject of thought; and having said all we choose to say on it, we leave it now to make or mar its fortune. If founded in truth and justice, in some shape it will ultimately be adopted; if in error and iniquity, as the wise public say, it will of course sink to the bottomless pit, where in that case it would belong.

“One word as to the elevation of the laboring classes. The manner in which our articles on the labor-

ing classes have been received, while it gives us ground of hope for the future, and proves that the number who really desire the elevation of the workingman is greater than we had supposed, teaches us what we knew before, that the regard expressed for him is in general mere cant. It is fashionable to talk of his elevation, and to profess great regard for him, but the country is by no means ripe for the adoption of any measures that will give him an equal rank in society. The day of his redemption is not yet. It will dawn, we hope. *En attendant*, all we can do for him seems to be, to labor earnestly for the establishment of a just and economical government, and especially of a sound system of finance, by means of which labor shall secure a larger portion of its proceeds. We see nothing else that can be *done* at present, except the free and full discussion of all principles and measures having or likely to have a bearing on the material relations of Capital and labor. The measures which might be effectual are now so repugnant to prevailing convictions, that all hope of securing their adoption should be abandoned." *

• Some months later, he was provoked by an attack on him by Mr. Arnold, a Tennessee Member of Congress, in the *National Intelligencer*, of Washington, to write a note to the editors of that journal.

"BOSTON, June 13, 1842.

"Messrs. Editors,—I must ask you to do me the favor of inserting in the *Intelligencer* a brief reply to the communication concerning me in your paper of the 10th inst. from the Hon. Mr. Arnold of Tennessee.

* *Boston Quarterly Review*, July, 1841, pp. 390, 391.

"I have of course no wish for a newspaper controversy with Mr. Arnold whom I have never injured, and who, I can readily believe, has had no intention of doing me any injustice. He has, I doubt not, acted in good faith, but he has been deceived, and has given a degree of credit to the statements made by partisan prints, in times of high political excitement, which they do not deserve. Charges made against peaceful and intelligent citizens, in such times, for mere political effect, should be suffered to sleep when the conflicts are over.

"The statements in the article from the Roxbury Democrat, inserted in the Intelligencer, by Mr. Arnold's request, are gross perversions of my Essay on the laboring classes, and give to a reader unacquainted with my general habits of thought and expression, a *totally false* impression with regard to the doctrine I really taught in that Essay. Those statements were too gross perversions, and come from a source so little entitled to credit, that I could not have given them a direct reply without derogating from my own self-respect. However, in my Review for October, 1840, the next number after the one in which appeared the Essay on the laboring classes, I reply at great length to the principal objections which had been urged against me. This reply was published separately, under the title of 'Brownson's Defence.' However, as very little political capital could be made out of this reply, it was not very widely noticed, and my contradictions of the charges gained therefore much less notoriety than the charges themselves.

"I should be very sorry to find myself aiding or abetting in the propagation of infidel or agrarian sentiments. I yield to none in the firmness of my faith in the

gospel of Our Lord, or in my devotion to social order, and social well-being. I perhaps have as much to lose by advocating such sentiments as are charged upon me, as have any of my fellow-citizens; and my fortunes are not so desperate as to render it necessary for me to advocate them in order to gain notoriety. I expressly disavow the whole charge brought against me by Mr. Arnold with a single exception, and that too as the public have understood it. The following extract from my Defence will give you my general religious creed; my political creed you will find in the pamphlet I send you with this on 'Constitutional Government.' *

"Our writings contain distinct avowals of our belief in the divine inspiration of the Old and New Testaments; in the reality of the Christian miracles; the Deity of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost; in the Trinity; the Fall of Man and his corruption by sin; the atonement, justification by Faith; Spiritual Regeneration; Immortality, and rewards and punishments in the world to come. All these doctrines have been distinctly recognized as truths, and commented on as such, in some one or other of our published writings.'

"Really, gentlemen, it seems to me that the man who avows his belief in these doctrines, ought at least to be spared the charge of infidelity. I have subjected myself to this charge of infidelity because I have labored long, for the sake of converting infidels, to show the reasonableness of religion. By dwelling for this purpose on that side of religious faith which approaches naturalism, I have given occasion to many to suspect me of want of faith in the supernatural. I have voluntarily

* Brownson's Works, vol. xv, p. 231.

submitted to this suspicion, because I was willing to save men from the horrors of unbelief by any personal sacrifice of reputation. Satisfied by many years' experience, at length, that the best way to convert unbelievers is to present the whole gospel, and nothing but the gospel, I am no longer willing to submit to the suspicion, because it abridges my means of usefulness, and my ability to labor effectually for the cause of religion and morals.

"I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

"O. A. BROWNSON."

Immediately after his defence of his article on the Laboring Classes, in the Fall of 1840, Brownson wrote for the Workingmen's Association of Charlestown a short pamphlet of 18 pages, in octavo, called, "An Address of the Workingmen of Charlestown, Mass., to their Brethren throughout the Commonwealth and the Union," designed not merely for electioneering purposes, but of permanent interest and appropriateness, not to be thrown aside with the mass of ephemeral productions which the elections called forth.

One of the journals Brownson was editing at the time was a radical workingman's journal, published in Charlestown, and he took great interest in the association, whose support he could always count on. The address was written with great calmness and dignity, by one who spoke from his own deep feelings and firm convictions, in an earnest, grave, and almost solemn tone.

"Brethren," the address says, "The time seems to have arrived when we, the real workingmen of the country, should pause and survey our condition; ascertain our state, what are our rights, and the means of securing their full enjoyment.

“We are in this country, as in all others, the great majority of the population. We are the real producers. By our toil and sweat, skill and industry, is produced all the wealth of the community. We have felled the primeval forests of this western world, converted them into fruitful fields, and planted the rose in the wilderness. We have erected these cities and villages which smile where lately was the Indian's wigwam, or the lair of the wild beast. We have called into existence American manufactures, and been the instruments by which commerce has amassed her treasures; our labor has dugged the canals, and constructed the railways, which are intersecting the country in all directions, and opening its resources. We have built and manned the ships which navigate every ocean, and furnished the houses of the rich with all their comforts and luxuries. Our labor has done it all. And yet what is our condition? We toil on from morning till night, from one year's end to another, increasing our exertions with each year, and with each day, still we are poor and dependent. Here, as everywhere else, they who pocket the proceeds of our labor look upon us as the lower class, and term us the mob. We are but laborers, operatives, *vulgar* workmen. We are poor. Our wages barely suffice to procure us the necessaries of life. We rarely have either leisure or opportunity to cultivate our minds, or to acquire that general knowledge of men and things, which no human being should grow up without. We are doomed by our position to grow up ignorant, and often in total neglect of all our nobler endowments. Our rights and interests attract no general attention. Legislators have no leisure to attend to our wants. And politicians have no further

concern with us than to wheedle us out of our votes by fair speeches and vague promises. The great concern is to take care of the rich and prosperous, the educated and powerful,—of those who fill the high places of society, ride in carriages, sit on cushioned seats, and feast their dainty palates on luxuries culled from every clime. The wants of these are urgent. *Their* rights, privileges, and interests will brook no delay. But we, we who bear all the burdens of society, pay all the revenues of government, and the incomes of the rich, why, we may go our way till a more convenient season."

Everything, the writer thinks is tending to reduce the workingmen to a lower condition still. The competition among manufacturers is growing less. The multiplication of large corporations is bringing the laborers under the control of corporate bodies, which check individual enterprise, lessen competition between individual capitalists, bind the capitalists together in close affinity of interest, and enable them to exert a sovereign control over the prices of labor. In a few years more they will be able to reduce wages to the minimum of human subsistence, and there will grow up around them a population enfeebled in mind and body, without either the mental or physical energy to shift its employment, or make a firm stand for the amelioration of its condition. When the supply is small and the demand brisk, workingmen find employment and receive tolerable wages; but for a brief season only. A hundred capitalists rush into the work of producing, and forthwith the market is glutted, sales diminish, and reduced wages are the consequence of the over production. The capitalist has no further use for the workingmen but to get as much labor

out of him as possible ; if he sickens and dies, the loss is his, not the employers'. Politicians profess great interest in his welfare, and promise, if he will give them his suffrage, his interests shall be looked after ; but whichever party succeeds at the polls, the interest of the capitalist is sure to triumph in the halls of legislation and at the tribunals of justice.

Nothing is to be hoped for from the Whigs ; for their party represents the interests of the capitalist, the employer, and therefore, interests directly adverse to the workingman's.

"What have we to hope from the Democratic party ? Certainly, if there be any difference, more than we have from the Whig party. We are far from having entire confidence in the leaders of the Democratic party, so-called. We could find no little fault with many of them. They seem to us to have no clear conceptions and no ardent love of the great doctrine of equality, on which they harp so much ; and we trust we do them no wrong, when we say that they will defend equal rights only so far as is necessary to place themselves in office. A considerable portion of the Democratic party differ from the Whigs only in name. They have the same attachment to banks, corporations, and high tariffs ; and if they could have their way, government would still be administered in the interests of business, not of labor. Nevertheless, at the present moment, there is apparently no little preference due to the administration party. So far as it concerns the general government, this party appears to us to have adopted just principles. It adheres to the constitution ; and labors to restrict the general government to the few, but important purposes, for

which it was originally instituted. It favors state rights; and opposes any encroachment upon them, not only by the federal executive, but also by congress and the federal judiciary. It opposes a national bank, and provides for the collecting, keeping, and disbursing the public revenues, without recourse to banks, or the business of banking. It also opposes a national debt, and, we believe, a protective tariff. It would leave all the great interests of the country to the natural and immutable laws of trade. This is much, and all that we can ask of the general government.

“ It is not from the action of the general government that we are to look for relief. The matters which chiefly concern us come not within its province. Its aid to us can be at best only negative. All we can ask of it is that it shall adopt no measures injurious to us. In the hands of the present party we have no such measures to apprehend. The administration has shown itself well disposed towards the laborer; and as it knows that it must rely for its support mainly on our suffrages, we have no fears of its failing to do for us all it can constitutionally.

“ If we come into our own state, we still have nothing to hope from the Whigs. We know the views of their candidate for governor. He professes to be our friend; but he has proposed no method of befriending us, but the establishment of a high tariff to increase the profit of the capitalist, and a national bank to inflate still more the currency, to enhance the prices of whatever we must buy, and reduce our wages still lower. So far as our salvation is to be effected by the agency of government, it must be done by the state governments; of course,

then, we should take a greater interest in the constitution and administration of the state governments than in those of the federal government. Are the views of the present Democratic party in this state such as should meet our approbation? In the abstract they are. But we cannot deny that we find not so much explicitness as to actual measures as we could wish. Were we asked what the party proposes to do in case it comes into power, we should be somewhat puzzled to answer. Some of its prominent members have occasionally leaned quite too far towards the aristocracy, and advance doctrines which we do not entertain. Nevertheless, we find in the party much to approve. Their candidate for governor, our present chief magistrate, has proved that his sympathies, up to a certain point, are with the workingmen. He has declared himself opposed to the present iniquitous banking system, which is much, although he may not have declared so fully his views concerning what should be adopted in its place. He has declared himself opposed to the favorite plan of the stockjobbers, of loaning the credit of the state to corporations, and he has ably opposed the whole system of corporations of which we have complained. He states it to be the duty of government to aim to introduce the greatest practicable equality among all the members of the community; he is in favor of universal suffrage, and contends that representation is a right of *man* and not of *property*. His address to the legislature, at the last session, was in the main unexceptionable, the most thoroughly democratic in its spirit and tendency of any governor's message which has ever fallen under our notice; and we have reason to believe that it was generally satisfactory to the workingmen

throughout the Union. A more unexceptionable candidate it would not be easy to select ; and we have no reason to apprehend that in his hands the government would be turned against us. So far as we know his views, they go in the right direction, although they may possibly fall short of our own. When the question comes up, as it now does, whether the workingmen shall vote for him or his Whig competitor, it seems to us that no workingman can hesitate a moment to prefer Marcus Morton to John Davis."

CHAPTER XV.

SOCIAL REFORM.—BROOK FARM.

The indignation which the articles on the Laboring Classes very generally provoked, though not unexpected by their author, gave a new turn to his meditations. He had, he believed, only followed out logically the principles he had been taught by the books and journals he read, and which he found adopted by every one with whom he came into contact, and which he had never thought of questioning.

It is a great misfortune that so few ever attain to perfect mental independence, ever master, so to speak, their own minds, and obtain premises of their own. They are influenced by the spirit of the age, and take, not their conclusions, but their premises, from what may be called the movement party of the time. These premises are in the atmosphere, they float about everywhere, are

supplied by conversation, by popular literature, more especially by the journals, and as they have never heard them questioned, they take them to be principles of reason itself, and never once doubt that if they reason logically from them, they will arrive at truth. The fact is, people generally, especially Englishmen and Americans, rarely ever think of pushing their principles to their last consequences, and will not seldom denounce as horrible, doctrines which are only strictly logical conclusions from their own premises which they will not suffer to be questioned. The prevailing democracy asserts suffrage as a natural right, hence women conclude very logically that society has no right to deny female suffrage, for the natural rights of women are the same with the natural rights of men. Thousands and hundreds of thousands will oppose female suffrage and ridicule and abuse women for demanding it, who yet insist that it is a natural right, and will abuse you up hill and down, if you venture to deny that it is a right, and maintain that it is a trust which civil society confers on whom it judges proper.

The young man innocently takes the popular premises on trust and does not dream of revising them. Thus Brownson had started with the premises of his age and country, such as the dominant philosophy of the day furnished him, and proceeded to reason logically from them, till he found himself in politics a no-government man, in morals denouncing marriage and defending free love, and in religion denying the existence of God. It was not till he discovered the real or affected horror at his conclusions, which followed logically from their own premises, that it occurred to him to revise the premises

which had been supplied him. If the premises are sound, and everybody says they are, the conclusions follow inevitably unless his logic was bad, and no one pretended that. Then of two things one, either his conclusions are true, and there is no God, or the popular premises, the received principles, are false and should be rejected.

He went back then, and examined for himself his premises, and found them false, absurd; he rejected them, adopted others which nobody could impugn, came to directly contrary conclusions, and lo, the outcry against him was greater than before. He was denounced as crazy, as bought up, as an enemy, a traitor to his country. He learned a good lesson, first, never to adopt a principle because he found it asserted by his age or country, and second, always to go back and examine it for himself in the light of universal reason and of infallible truth. The fact is, the people are seldom absolutely wrong or absolutely right. They mix up truth and falsehood in horrid confusion, and never think of disentangling them. They do not discriminate, and never, as a body, push either the truth or the falsehood to the last logical consequences, and if one does it for them, they recognize nothing of their own in his conclusions, let them be the logical consequences of their falsehood or of their truth. The men who take care not to draw the last consequences, but stop short, and hang suspended between truth and error, say Good Lord in one breath, and Good Devil in the next, are called practical men, men of common sense, who can be safely trusted, for they never take extreme views.

Brownson was not born to be one of these practical men, and he had too much insight and clearness of view

to be entangled in the confusion of the popular mind. He was an acute and rigid logician, had learnt the necessity of observing the categories, and never reasoned, as they say in the schools, from an undistributed middle. But his education had left a sort of dualism in his mind, and he had not as yet got wholly rid of it. He had not found the copula or nexus between the spiritual and the temporal, the supernatural and the natural; but he could not long continue, as the majority of men do, to reason from one set of principles in religion and a contradictory set in politics or civil society. Yet the problem was shaping itself, hardly suspected by himself, in his active and energetic mind, and it was sure that the moment he distinctly apprehended the problem he would grasp the solution and wonder that he had never before seen it.

This mental process must be carried on by one's own thought, and one cannot receive the solution till the mind by its own action has reached it. You cannot give it to another; he must work it out for himself or he will never make it his own and be able to use it. You may so instruct one that the problem will never arise, and the difficulty to be removed will never exist. But if it does exist, instead of giving him the solution, it is wiser to leave him to find it out for himself, for fear of impeding the action of his mind. You may win his confidence so that he will accept your words and swear by them as *verba magistri*, but that will do him a great injury and make him henceforth speak as a parrot. But try to keep his mind directed to the problem and suggest now and then a principle that will aid without embarrassing his free action.

Brownson had never pretended, and did not now pretend to be able to point out any specific remedy for the social evils to which he called attention, or to show how they might be prevented. His main purpose was to arrest the attention of the community, and to engage the minds of those who gave tone to thought, and direction to affairs, in the serious and earnest consideration of the subject.

Albert Brisbane contended, in the pages of the *Boston Quarterly Review*, for Fourier's theory, and Brownson so far agreed with that theory as to advocate, as he did before ever he heard Fourier's name, the substitution of some form of attractive industry for the present system of labor at wages, and he was further convinced that the system must embrace the principle of association, and of associations larger than the family and smaller than the state. But he did not think Fourier's plan the best, nor even that their formation should be directly aimed at, but they should be left to form themselves spontaneously when the world should be ripe for them. Moreover, he combatted Fourier's philosophy of the passions, which proposed to get rid of the antagonism which obtains both in the individual and in society, by harmonizing the passions; not by denying, destroying, or subduing them, but by affording each its legitimate gratification. On the contrary, Brownson shows that harmony of the passions is out of the question, or, so far as attainable at all, only attainable by self-denial.

Robert Dale Owen, seeing that an artificial and improperly organized society was not merely the effect of individual depravity, but also a cause, or that circumstances have much influence in the formation of character;

inferred that our characters are formed altogether by circumstances, without any coöperation of ours. We are, therefore, wholly creatures of circumstances, and in order to make us what we ought to be, nothing is necessary but to surround us with the proper circumstances. Hence his new scheme of society, his attempt to induce us to live in parallelograms. The realization of his dream was impracticable, because it made no allowance for individual activity; because it recognized only man's passivity; and more especially because it needed for its introduction the virtue which, according to its own principles, could be obtained only by its successful operation.

Owen's scheme was obnoxious to grave objections. Its good point was its recognition of the influence of institutions, of "circumstances," in the formation of character; but in making man the mere creature of circumstances, he denied his free agency. By making the community everything and taking the element of union, order, justice, peace, exclusively, he depresses, if he does not destroy, individuality, and his community cannot fail to degenerate into practical tyranny, under which both freedom and progress become impossible. The right of property is denied, too, by his scheme of a community of goods; for all property is exclusive, individual. The right is a natural right, and must therefore be held sacred. Owen also denied the religious element, without which no social reorganization can be acceptable to the race, or permanent or beneficial. Brownson further objected to Owen's denial of the necessity of marriage laws, and in objecting set forth his views of marriage in a short paragraph which seems very proper to insert in this place. "The actual laws on marriage in most

countries may, doubtless, need some ameliorations, but the continuance of the marriage relation cannot be left to the discretion of the parties interested, with safety either to society or to the parties themselves. Marriage is not a mere private agreement, nor civil contract even, but also a sacrament, and should, therefore, be placed under safeguard of both religion and law. The passion usually most active in leading to marriage is good and holy, as are all the passions; but reason and morality are not sufficient to keep it within bounds. All the passions have a tendency to grow tired of what is familiar, and to crave what is novel. Make the continuance of the marriage relation a mere matter of caprice, as it would be if all laws on the subject were abrogated, and it would not be seldom that we should find a man divorcing the wife of yesterday to take another that strikes his fancy to-day, who will be equally distasteful to-morrow, and must in her turn give way to another. Doubtless there are evils to which married life is now subject that it were desirable to remedy. Marriage is not always that solace and relief to man's estate it should be. . . . But the evils complained of are the result of causes which operate before the marriage law takes effect, and are deeply seated in the artificiality of the present social organization,—in its family pride, its factitious distinctions of blood and fortunes, which interrupt the natural course of young affection, and but too often make marriage a mere legalized prostitution, a mere contrivance for uniting families and estates, or for acquiring a fortune." * Some months later, in an article in the same Review for April, 1842, he says that even were married

* Boston Quarterly Review, July, 1841, p. 272.

life as inharmonious and seemingly intolerable as claimed by sentimental reformers, divorce would be the worst possible remedy. Our feelings are not beyond our control, and the parties might get over their difficulties if they would make the effort. "If divorce were lawful and marriage dissoluble at the will of one party or of both parties, it would bring woman very little relief. The passions or the sentiments which would crave a divorce, would rarely be able to find the satisfaction demanded. The cause of the suffering complained of is not after all so much the result of the incompatibility of the parties as we sometimes suppose. It is inherent in one or both of the parties, and would be not less active, as a general rule, in any new relation one or the other might form." But strongest of all: "We protest against the lawfulness of divorce. Marriage by its own nature is absolutely indissoluble. When a couple enter into the marriage relation they do it for life; they understand it, and they mean it for life. If they entered it with any reservation, with an understanding that it was to continue only for a period, only so long as it should be mutually agreeable to themselves, they would not look upon it as marriage; it would want in their eyes the character of sanctity, and would be not at all distinguishable from a mere transient commerce of passion and caprice." * If this be so, and it certainly is so, what must be thought of the pretended marriages of persons who have been divorced, or are in favor of a divorce when wanted?

The St.-Simonians recognized the community element as well as the individual element of human nature, and made one the limit of the other. They acknowledged, too,

† Ibid. April, 1842, pp. 245-6. Brownson's Works, vol. xix, pp. 60-1.

the religious element which Owen denied. Their object was to devise a social scheme which, avoiding the false principles of the present society, should allow ample scope for the full development of all man's faculties, his whole nature, in the order intended by the Creator. Their scheme fell to pieces, as must all schemes for destroying the present society, and constructing a new one in its place, however wisely or prudently they may be devised, for the simple reason that the social state, or existing society is not an arbitrary creation; but grows out of the elements of human nature and is modified as they are modified. A new social state, constructed according to an abstract theory of man, would soon fail, even could it be introduced, because it would find no support in the actual intelligence, habits, customs, associations, and affections of the people. Any scheme which does not assume society as it is, for its point of departure, is impracticable. All schemes of social reform must take society as it is, to begin with, and find in its actual constitution the law of their proceeding; and reform, not destroy; develop, instead of creating.

Another class of reformers, for whom Brownson had great respect, and which included some of his warmest personal friends, among whom was Dr. Channing, looked to moral, intellectual, religious, and physical culture to effect the needed reform, and he himself had heretofore been much biassed in their favor. Further reflection had however, convinced him that reason and morality are feeble barriers against passion in its vehemence, and to rely on them alone for the great mass of mankind, would be to open the door to unbridled lust, and its whole desolating train. We should do all in our power

so to reorganize society that it shall administer no unnatural stimulus to the passions, but we should also stand ready with law in our hands, to whip them back whenever they undertake to leap their bounds.

Individual freedom and well-being are promoted by what are called the selfish instincts, or rather those which lead the individual to assert and maintain his own rights and dignity. They are neither effects nor evidences of the Fall, but are as primitive in man and are as necessary to make up the glory and excellence of his character, as are the disinterested and heroic instincts, and within their sphere, as worthy to be obeyed. As, however, they are the strongest and most active, the others will be too weak to control them and to prevent one individually from unduly encroaching on another. Hence the necessity of society, which he defines "the union of all for the protection of each." Social supervision and control, or government, has, then, an eternal necessity in man's essential nature, and is the force needed to enable society to maintain every individual in the possession of all his rights, in relation to other individuals, and in relation to society itself. Government then, so far from being an obstacle in the way, is the great and indispensable agent of reform.

"In appealing so directly as we do to government, and making it almost the sole agent through which we are to remedy social evils, we by no means forget religion, morality, or individual intelligence. No man can rate them higher than we do. We hold them absolutely indispensable. But they must not be imprisoned in the bosom of the individual. They must be brought out of the interior of man, and made to disclose the true end of

all social institutions, and to contribute to their adoption. We would always write as the Christian and the moralist, as well as the statesman. But we would use Christianity and morality in organizing the state and shaping its measures, not less than in our private exhortations to individuals. The end disclosed by true religion, the one enjoined by morality, and that sought by the state, are one and the same : to wit, the freedom and progress in virtue and happiness of every individual. Unless the state maintain freedom for the individual, religion and morality can do little besides solace him in his sufferings, and strengthen him for his trials. This is no doubt a high office, and never to be thought lightly of; but the intelligence, purity, and loftiness of soul religion and morality are fitted to quicken, should be directed to the establishment of such institutions and the enactment of such laws as shall always favor truth, justice, freedom, order, and well-being." * The practical political problem is, how to constitute the government so as to provide an effective guaranty against the encroachments of one individual on another, and against the encroachment of government or society on the individual. There was a growing tendency then, which has since become an almost universal practice, to understand by democracy a form of government in which the majority, the absolute numerical majority, may rule unrestrained, and a consequent tendency to sweep away every institution, every organic form, whether in the executive, judicial, or legislative branch of the government, which may have interposed an obstacle to the free and full expression of the irresponsible will of the majority. But majorities.

* Boston Quarterly Review, July 1841, p. 291.

are just as likely to err as are minorities; and even if they were not, they do not determine the measures or candidates voted on. These, at best, are only the choice of a majority of whatever party is successful, and that majority may be very likely only one fourth or one third part of those voting. As an actual fact, however, they are determined on by the few more active partisans, usually designated party leaders. Moreover, these few are, by their relation to government and their position, constituted a plunder party, and they are induced by all the force of selfishness, which always increases by what it feeds upon, to make the government an instrument for plundering the people to the greatest possible extent. These few have the command of the government, for they are the small minority governing the ruling party. Now against these plunderers, these wielders of the whole organized power of the community, what are simple individuals, however independent in their suffrages, or however moral and enlightened in their aims? They are as the reed before the blast. They may be trampled on with impunity.

The individual is too weak to withstand the cupidity of the plunder party, which the party of the government always is, and always will be. In order to protect him you must league him with a part of the community which shall make common cause with him, and have the power to arrest the action of government the moment it invades, or threatens to invade, his rights. "Many things are thought to be democratic, against which a wise statesman with set his face. It is not democracy we want, but good government, a government which secures to each individual, by effective guaranties, the free and full enjoyment

of all his natural rights. These guaranties, which are the substance, may be lost, while we are in pursuit of abstractions, and theoretic unity, which are often but mere shadows. All good government is founded in compromise, and is more or less complicated. To simplify it is nothing else than to render it absolute. If we simplify so as to render all consistent with the popular idea of democracy, we only bring individuals and minorities under the absolute sway of the majority. We must take care not to simplify till we simplify away all our rights, all that government is instituted to protect."* The particular manner of organizing the state, so as always to have the concurrence of the parts as a check upon the absolute numerical majority, must be left to the particular state, to be determined according to its already existing natural or artificial divisions. In some states it may be done by regarding territorial divisions, in others, perhaps, by making valuation, instead of population, the basis; in some, by taking the concurring majorities only in forming the constitution, and in others by representing these in one house and the numerical majority in the other. The precise manner of getting at it is the question for the practical statesmen of the community it concerns. Without some contrivance of the sort, a wise administration of the government and its beneficial working will be a matter of accident, never to be counted on with any degree of certainty.

Alexander Everett's favorable opinion of some of these views is contained in a letter written immediately

* *Social Evils and their Remedy*. Boston Quarterly Review, July 1841, p. 289.

after he had read them, and there was no one whose opinion was more valued by their author.

“JEFFERSON COLLEGE,

“ST. JAMES'S PARISH, LA., July 9, 1841.

“My dear sir,—I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of informing you with what exemplary punctuality your Review is delivered in the Far Southwest! I received the July number from the post-office precisely on the first of July. The North-American, the Christian Examiner, the Northern Light, the Lady's Book, the Democratic Review, all due here on the same day, and all by mail, have, up to this 9th inst., given no signs of life.

“The articles are excellent, with the exception, perhaps, of the one which you did not write, and which is a little too Swedenborgian for my meridian. Your remarks on *Social Evils and their Remedies* are full of highly important meaning. I agree with you entirely in regard to the disposition of our philanthropists to undervalue the influence of government. The truth is, that nine-tenths of the difference between the New-Zealander and the Englishman is the effect of the difference between the political institutions under which they have been respectively educated. Such a man as Dr. Channing ought to know this. The meagerness of our political disquisitions is a fact melancholy enough. We reverse the old rule about writing, and write *multa, non multum*. Even in Mr. Webster's speeches there is no profound or thorough discussion of general principles. It is all syllogizing upon a given brief, and I have doubts whether the ‘Great Expounder,’ if suddenly called upon, could

tell the meaning of the word Constitution. I intend, the next time I meet him, to try the experiment.

“The philosophical articles are very fine, and are even more agreeable reading than the political, because the subjects are more interesting. I do not know whether His ex-Excellency, the Collector,* reads your Review. If he do, I should think he must feel a little uneasiness of conscience at having removed a person capable of writing it from the petty place you held under his predecessor. On your side, you are probably better off out of such a place than in it. I have always regretted, that circumstances did not permit you to accept Mr. Cousin's invitation to go and live with him at Paris. A residence in his family for a year or two would have been, on all accounts, both agreeable and useful, and would have given you importance with our wise public, who, in general, can only see American merit through European spectacles. *Au reste*, with your activity and perseverance there is no danger of your not ultimately reaching your level.

“I am now pretty well installed in my place here, and find it thus far correspond with my expectations. It will give me, I think, a good deal of leisure for the pen, which I hope, if I remain any length of time, to improve, by drawing from the bottom of my inkstand some works, which have been ‘cabin'd, cribbed and confined,’ there for years, like the spirits of future heroes in Virgil's Elysium,—waiting for a chance to see daylight.—I had a sort of inauguration last week, after the close of the annual examination, and delivered an address, which is

* Levi Lincoln, Jr., appointed by Harrison Collector of the port of Boston, had been Governor of Massachusetts some fifteen years previously.

now printing. When it is out, I will send you a copy. It seemed to give satisfaction here, but will be thought, I fear, at the North, rather commonplace.

"If I remain here long, I think I shall prepare to deliver, for the edification of the students, a course of lectures on Moral Philosophy, in its several branches of Metaphysics, Ethics, Politics, and Political Economy. I have studied them all with more attention than most amateurs, and though I do not know that I have come to any conclusions of much importance, I should like if convenient, to embody the results of my reading in a methodical form. You see, therefore, that you are likely to have work for the Review. *En attendant*, let me hear from you, and believe me truly yours,

"A. H. EVERETT."

Calhoun liked the views on social reform, an analysis of which has been given. It is to them he refers in the first part of the following letter :

"FORT HILL, 31st October, 1841.

"Dear sir, —I not only read with pleasure the article to which you refer, when the number first appeared, but have read it again, in order that I might answer your letter from fuller and more recent impressions. It is in the right track, and very able. There is scarcely a view taken, or sentiment expressed, in which I do not fully concur, and it gives me pleasure to say, I heard several of our friends during the late session speak highly of it. I do hope, it will contribute to give a practical and true direction to the rising spirit of liberal enquiry, which has manifested itself in New England, and especially in

Boston, within the few last years. Next to the Staple States, New England has the deepest interest in the views, on which you have so successfully touched.

“I have, in confidence, commenced and made some progress in a regular and, I think I may say, scientific development of my views of government; but my numerous engagements, publick and private, leave me little leisure to devote to it. I intend this wholly for yourself.

“I shall look for your treatise on metaphysicks with interest. It is long since I have read any regular treatise on the subject, but shall certainly read yours, when it appears.

“I am much gratified to learn, that you have a prospect of a seat in the Legislature, both because it indicates the strong hold you have on those around you, and will enlarge the sphere of your usefulness.

“I regard the attack on the veto, and the address of Clay's wing of the Whigs, as you do, and will probably offer my opinion on the former, should the subject come up at the next session.

“I anticipate much pleasure from perusing your article on the Distribution bill in your January number. Its repeal must be insisted on, and the Republican States ought to be called on to scorn the bribe. This State, I feel confident, will not touch the forbidden thing. I hope you will strongly urge its repeal in your article. The accepting, or rejecting it, will go far to test the purity of the party. And in that connection, I am strongly inclined to think, the discussion on the subject ought not to be delayed. Its rejection by all the Republican States would make a profound impression, and would have a

happy effect any way. To receive it will make them parties to this gross infraction of the Constitution.

“But to turn to other subjects. The utter overthrow of the Whigs marks an important stage in our political history, and calls for prompt attention on the part of all who wish success to our cause.

“I regard the battle as fought, and the victory won, and the question to be, how shall we best secure the fruits of victory? Whiggery itself is overthrown, never to rise again, under its present name and form. But experience has taught me that it is far easier to gain a victory in politicks, than to reap its fruits. There is in any party a large corps of spoilsmen, the followers of the camp. Experience has proved that our party constitutes no exception. They will be greatly increased by the defeat of the Whigs, by recruits from their ranks; and now that we have no foe to dread, they will be sure to commence the game of President making. Their creed naturally leads them to look out for an available candidate who will reward liberally; and, if left to manage in their own way, will succeed with their man, when all will be lost, and worse than lost. Every instance of the kind weakens the confidence of the people, and makes them indifferent to elections and their results.

“It was never more important than now to prevent such a result. Never before was there so fair an opportunity of rescuing the government and restoring the constitution; and if permitted to pass, never, I fear, will there be such another.

“To prevent this result, the sound portion of the party must be also in motion. They, too, must look out for their man,—he who most truly represents their prin-

ciples ; in whom they most confide, and is most capable of carrying through the reformation required. They must take their stand on him, with that firm resolution, which results from the conviction, that it is even better to be defeated in a good cause, than not to make the effort to maintain it always is, and as it would be pre-eminently in this instance. If after so great a struggle and decisive victory, the fruits should be lost, a change of system and a revolution in the government would almost certainly follow ; and our principles and cause would be lost ; but if we rally and stand fast by them, victory may one day crown our efforts, and save the government and country.

“ Who ought to be selected must rest with our friends to determine. All I insist on is, that the defeat of the Whigs, makes a prompt course indispensable. I have no solicitude personally, in reference to the subject. If I know myself, I would not, at my time of life, accept the highest office, if proffered, without opposition, but from a sense of duty; but if it should be thought that I am the most capable of turning to the best account for the country this deeply important juncture, I would not decline the responsibility. You will, of course, understand what I write to be in strict confidence, and intended only for yourself.

“ Yours truly,

“ J. C. CALHOUN.

“ O. A. BROWNSON, ESQ.”

Brownson and Ripley often compared their views in regard to social reform, and on this as on most subjects, found themselves very closely in accord. How much, if

at all, George Ripley was indebted to Brownson for his Brook-Farm scheme, it might be hard to say, but the principles on which it was established were talked over between them.

Ripley was a man of rare attainments, one of our best scholars and ablest metaphysicians. He was well acquainted with the various plans of world-reform from Plato's Republic to Fourier's Phalanx; but the establishment at West Roxbury was the result, not of his theorizing, but of his mental and spiritual wants. His conceptions of Christianity were comprehended in the gospel law of love and equality, requiring us to honor all men and to treat each man as a brother, whatever his occupation. His attempt was to realize the Christian ideal by establishing truly Christian relations between the members and the community, and between member and member. A few men and women, of like views and feelings, grouped themselves around him, not as their master, but as their friend and brother.

The two rocks on which the reformer is in danger of being wrecked are communism and individualism. In seeking to steer clear of the one he is almost sure to strike upon the other; for the passage between them is narrow and difficult, and none but the most able and experienced pilot can make it with success. The community at West Roxbury was not intended, like Owen's, Fourier's, or the Saint-Simonians', to be a substitute for the larger associations of church and state, but left these standing in all their necessity and force. It was an aggregation of families, seeking to enlarge the sphere of the family, by extending the family feeling and relations beyond the ties of blood, but without superseding them,

and in the words of Leroux, while preserving the family inviolate, to break the family caste. Ripley held the family sacred, but family caste he believed to be one of the scourges of humanity. Nor was the individual destroyed. Individual property was recognized and secured. But by making time, not skill nor intensity, the basis for determining compensation, by eating at a common table, laboring in common, and sharing in common the advantages of whatever individual excellence there was in the community, the individual feeling would, it was thought, be subdued, and while suffered to remain as a spring to industry, be shorn of its power to encroach on the social body. Every one obtained his bread by the sweat of his face. Ripley very justly remarked of the object of their industry: "Every community should have its leading purpose, some one main object to which it directs its energies. We are a company of teachers. The branch of industry which we pursue as our primary object, and chief means of support, is teaching. Others may be companies of manufacturers or of agriculturists; or may engage in some particular branch of manufacture or of agriculture. Whatever the branch of industry agreed upon, it will be necessary to make that the principal object of pursuit, as the only way in which unity and efficiency can be secured to the labors of the community." He wanted to secure the advantages of associated and attractive industry, in a way consistent with American tastes, habits, and convictions, without the complicated machinery and multiplicity of details often frivolous, of other schemes, so as to secure to every individual a competence as the reward of his industry, while rendering industry, in all its branches, compatible with the highest

moral and intellectual culture and the greatest delicacy and refinement of manners.

Brook Farm was opened in the summer of 1841, and conducted on the principles just set forth, for three years. In 1844, however, Ripley, with the approval of some of his associates, and the consent of them all, converted it into a Fourierist Phalanx, on which plan it continued for two years, though without any improvement in its financial condition. The phalanstery was destroyed by fire, and Ripley was left poor and discouraged. But he soon rallied, and set out on the literary career which gained him a good income and high distinction.

In 1840, Ripley started a transcendental review known as the *Dial*, which was supported by Emerson, Channing, and a number of other Unitarians. Brownson did not at that time quarrel with the transcendentalists, but he saw that their philosophy was pantheistic, and would lead to infidelity. The result was that Brownson's intercourse with them became less frequent than before, though there was no change in the warmth of his and Ripley's mutual friendship. But it was more than a year after the inauguration of the Brook Farm Association, before Brownson published any remarks concerning it. At last, in November, 1842, *The Democratic Review* contained an article in which he made a most favorable representation of the principles and condition of that association. This article made a favorable impression on Mr. Garland, who wrote him in consequence this very interesting letter.

“PETERSBURG, VA., November 28th, 1842.

“Dear sir,—I trust you will not be surprised at receiving a letter from me. I have the boldness to

write to you as a friend, for you are my friend,—unconsciously to yourself the most intimate and precious friend I have. With you have I communed of late more than with any other man—and in you alone have I found a correspondence of thought and sympathy of feeling. You have given voice and utterance to what has been anxiously struggling in my bosom for years—cast a ray of light athwart the dark weltering chaos of the Past, Present, and Future—given shape and distinctness to a wild sea of thought—furnished the lofty, heart-gladdening ideal for which my soul had been longing—in a word, you have led me though the wilderness and placed in my hand the golden bough which serves as a talisman to conduct me into Elysian Fields. For all this I thank you—with my whole heart I thank you—and would take you to my bosom, if I could, as a loving father, and open my inmost thoughts to your kind scrutiny.

“There is much yet, very much which I wish to know and have solved by the living voice face to face. This privilege I hope some day to enjoy. I would gladly go all the way to Boston for no other purpose, had I the time and means. So earnest am I to *know* the truth, and from you alone of living men, who speak the English tongue, have I any hope of being *imbued* with that knowledge.

“But it is not on my own account that I write to you now. I wish to know something more about that school you speak of in your last communication to the Democratic Review. I have *six* children,—the three oldest daughters—fourteen—eleven—and nine years of age,—and just such a school I have been long anxiously looking about for, that I might send them to it. It is only in

such a place do I think it possible that all the faculties can be developed, moral, intellectual, and physical, and that education imparted which will fit them to discharge justly and magnanimously all the offices and duties of life. Such is my present impression, received from yourself and your lady correspondent (who is she?), a noble woman. But before I am fully satisfied I wish a word from you whispered in the private ear. Can I with undivided faith, trust the precious jewels of my heart to the keeping of those people with the full assurance that they will be preserved bright and untarnished? In sending my children, too, away, I shall have to break through the established customs of a vitiated state of society, and to disregard the more unreasonable prejudices of my own southern people. A failure then would be disastrous. Now solve me this difficulty,—as to the intellectual and physical attainments I have no doubt, but this, what sort of moral stamp will be given to the character? What will be the result of that general intercourse of the sexes spoken of in the lady's letter? What are the guards and protections thrown around that 'weaker vessel'—woman? Solve me this, for here is my main difficulty. When I think of the temptations and allurements in such a society to a young and ardent and thoughtless girl away from home and mother and friends, I pause—I fear—I tremble. My dear friend, settle me on this point, and I am satisfied. If you satisfy me on that, nothing but the want of means will prevent me from sending my children to Roxbury next spring.

"And, by the way, what will be the necessary expenses? I have fancied them very small, and that their own industry might supply most of their wants

without a call on father's purse. How is this? If I am right in this conjecture then indeed has a new era begun in the world.—Universal education will then be in the reach of all. Such an education as Abbott Lawrence cannot even buy for his children at any price will be attainable by the humblest citizen! I am impatient to hear from you.

“Yours most truly,

“HUGH A. GARLAND.”*

In a letter to Ripley, Brownson requested him to give such information as would enable him to answer Garland's inquiry, and he received the following answer:

“BROOK FARM, 18 December, 1842.

“My dear Brownson,—I am very glad that I yielded to the impulse that I felt to write you by Orestes, although I could send you only a hasty and imperfect note. Perhaps, however, you may be less pleased with the movement than myself, for like the man whose wooden leg travelled on when once started, in spite of himself, you cannot tell when my pen will stop when once it begins to run. At any rate, I am sure you will not be sorry to be set at ease entirely about Orestes, who is certainly, to the best of my knowledge, as good a lad as Brook Farm can boast of, and a general favorite with the older portion of our tribe, to say the least. I never heard any complaint of him from chick or child; except that the first week or

* Mr. Garland was clerk of the House of Representatives, and on organizing the 26th Congress refused to call the names of five members from New Jersey, whose seats were contested, thus leaving the number of members called at 237,—119 Democrats and 118 Whigs. The five Whigs held the Governor of New Jersey's certificate, and the five Democrats the Secretary of State's. The latter were finally admitted on proof that they had received the majority of votes. The Governor had rejected the votes of some precincts on account of illegality in holding the elections. The election of a speaker for this House is mentioned in Mr. Calhoun's letter in the next chapter.

two it was thought he was inclined to be too indolent to suit our busy generation ; all that, I think, has passed away ; and I don't believe that Leach, who works with him more than any other one, would say that he was idle. I have heard him speak in great praise of his prowess with the axe, in the woods, and I am eye-witness to his faithful labors nearer home. Orestes is slow, and hitherto has not learned how to use his body with the greatest advantage ; but one or two years will call forth a greater dexterity, and there is no fear but that he will be an efficient man,—a man of nerve, boldness, and decision. For my own part, though I do not come much in contact with him, except three lessons a week in Agricultural Chemistry, I confess that aside from the interest I should take in him for his father's sake, he inspires me with a feeling of affectionate esteem. Leach, I think, loves him almost as much as if he were his own son, and my wife, I know, is very warm in her regard for him, and greatly interested to aid him on the course of improvement, which she believes him to have commenced. She admonishes and advises him, as if he were a brother ; and he receives all her counsels with great docility and sweetness. As to Mr. Dana's remark, you must take it at a reasonable discount ; he is a prince among men by his character and feelings ; but, like yourself, he is apt to deal in strong expressions, and his bark is worse than his bite. I dare say he only repeated unthinkingly what he had heard thrown out, and did not stop to make the essential qualifications. A little too much of this, perhaps, but I cannot bear even the show of injustice, and from the tone of your remarks, I fear that you did not think so highly of O's position among us, as he deserves ;

and all the worse, because an incorrect impression was given by some of our own number.

“I hope you know me too well to believe that any small thing would diminish my great respect for your intellect, or the sincere friendship I have cherished for you from the first of our acquaintance. We have truly sympathized as few men have done; you have always quickened my love for humanity; and for no small share of what mental clearness I may have, am I indebted to the hours of genial, pleasant intercourse I have enjoyed with you. If I had never known you, I should never have been engaged in this enterprise. I consider it as the incarnation of those transcendental truths which we have held in common, and which you have done much to make me love. To perceive the worth of man as man, to see through the hollowness and injustice of our social conventionalities, and to resolve on the reform of my own household, were with me almost simultaneous acts. This resolve attracted kindred spirits, and here we are. This is the *mot d'énigme* of all our movement. How can I but feel gratified in seeing lofty practical visions embodied in the most truly democratic state that I have ever known—small as may be the ground plan of our edifice. You know the keen enjoyment I took in the discussions of the most abstract theories; these theories however all bore on the possible future of humanity; and now, in living them, shall I confess there is an inward delight, such as one would scarce dream of—so great as to produce a disinclination either to speak or write about them,—so much more intense is the daily consciousness of life? With the vivid feeling that the great revolution in my life plan was the inevitable fruit

of the ideas for which you most valued me, I will own to something of disappointment that you should give us so little sympathy or recognition, when a friendly word would have been cheering amidst such a tempest of abuse as fell upon us from the conservative sky. But never, my dear friend, have I felt estranged from you, or ceased to believe that you would one day come to something like a feeling of paternity for our infant hope. Amply, too amply, I know, have you justified this belief in your recent article. And now what is the part between you and me. Let us live on, and love on still; assured that all good words and just works are eternal in God.

"Your last article revives my love of metaphysics. As yet, I have only read, not studied it. I mean to give it a fair hearing: and meantime, I hope to see you.

"As to your questions, it is true that some of our young people are not quite free from nonsense. They unconsciously worship R. W. E. with a too blind adoration, and like that master, express themselves confusedly. They are pure, simple souls, apparently without an erring instinct, and their beautiful divine lives would seem to sanction their doctrine. But their practical influence is not bad. Our current here sets all the other way, and as a place of education, for either sex, we are so guarded and balanced by a host of influences, that I apprehend no evil results. You must consult those who have had children here. We have several young ladies of the age you mention, and are willing to receive a few more. At present, we have no vacancy for girls to defray their expenses by their labor. Our terms for board and tuition are \$4.00 a week. In consideration of three com-

ing from one family, no doubt a reasonable deduction from the above terms might be made.

"You will do well to inquire of Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Gannett, who have had daughters with us, over a year, as to the influence we exert, whose testimony, at any rate, might be worth more than ours. Yours ever truly

"G. R.

"REV. O. A. BROWNSON, Boston, Mass."

A little more than a year after the establishment of the Brook Farm community, Brownson placed his eldest son, Orestes, at West Roxbury. Orestes was then 14 years old, very large and strong for his age, but more fond of play than of study or work, and as big of heart as of body. With the exception of Charles A. Dana, who pretended that Orestes was indolent, and blamed him for his clumsiness, every one at Brook Farm took kindly to him. He remained there less than a year. One of the accomplished daughters of Jonathan Russell aroused in him a passion for the sea by singing "A Life on the Ocean Wave," and he made known his desire to Ripley, who communicated it to his father in a letter here inserted.

"BROOK FARM, 22 July, 1843.

"My dear Brownson,—I find that Orestes feels inclined to make some change in his situation, and would like to leave Brook Farm, at furthest, by the expiration of one year from the time he came.

"I understand from him that his disinclination to remain arises from no complaint of his treatment here, from no objection to the Association or any of its mem-

bers ; but rather from an inappeasable wish to try his fortune on the sea.

" We have no fault to find with Orestes ; he is a boy of good endowments and good disposition : and I trust has not degenerated since he has been with us. We should be happy to retain him if he should make up his mind to be content ; otherwise, I think you will agree with me, that it will not be best to put any great force on his inclination.

" We shall prefer to have him complete his year, but shall cheerfully accede to any arrangement which you may think best.

" Yours my dear friend, with truth and love,

" GEO. RIPLEY."

It was thought best to let Orestes indulge his fancy for a sea life, and the Sturgises who were members of Brownson's congregation, took great interest in the matter. William Sturgis wrote this letter which will give the reader some notion of a type of Boston merchants in those days.

" BOSTON, October 6th, 1843.

" Dear sir,—Thinking it may not be convenient at the present time for you to advance the sum necessary to give your son a comfortable outfit, I take the liberty to enclose a check for forty dollars as a loan *to him*, to be repaid when he gets command of a good ship (as I doubt not he will do) by expending a like sum for the benefit of some worthy young man similarly situated. I enclose, too, a memorandum made by Capt. R. Sturgis, of the principal articles he will require, which can be

obtained upon most favorable terms at the clothing store of the 'Seaman's Aid Society,' under the Seaman's Church, at the north part of the city. Capt. Sturgis inquired the prices of suitable articles which are on his memorandum. Any old clothes which your son may have will answer to wear on shipboard (if they are large enough), and thus save the cost of new. Pray urge upon him the *necessity* of taking care of his things, and not leave them 'lying about deck,' or suffering older sailors to cheat him out of them, as they often do in their dealings with 'green-hands.' Let me strongly recommend to him *never* to make use of ardent spirits, nor of tobacco, *in any form*, but to support the authority, and submit to the orders of the officers, even if they should *appear* to him to be quite unreasonable. He has the best wishes of

"Your friend and servant,

"WM. STURGIS.

"Rev. O. A. BROWNSON."

Russel Sturgis presented to Orestes a sextant, a copy of Bowditch's "Navigation," and a few other books, chiefly mathematical. He also selected a good ship, the "Dover," full rigged, and commanded by a model master and his intimate friend, Captain Austin, under whom Orestes shipped for Calcutta.

CHAPTER XVI.

POLITICS.—SUB-TREASURY BILL.—TYLER.—MOVEMENT IN FAVOR OF CALHOUN.—DORR'S REBELLION.

THE great question in federal politics in 1838, known as the Sub-treasury bill, was a measure to provide for the collecting, safe-keeping, and disbursement of the public revenues, without recourse to banks. The principal champion of the bill in the Senate was Calhoun, and it was resisted by Webster and Clay.

In defending the principle of the bill in the Boston Quarterly Review, for in the details he took no interest, Brownson presents the question as one of expediency only ; is it expedient for the government to dispense with all bank agency in the management of its fiscal concerns ?

The principal governments of the country according to the theory of our constitution, are the state governments. The federal government was designed to take charge of our external relations, and those of the states to each other, but not intended to affect the private interests of the people, as individual citizens, except so far as necessary to the exercise of its delegated powers. Of two measures for accomplishing a constitutional end, one connecting the federal government intimately with all the business of the country, and bringing it into close connection with every individual citizen, and the other having very little bearing on individual citizens, leaving them almost entire freedom, the second ought to be adopted instead of the first, even if in all other respects

less feasible or beneficial ; for the federal government is restricted to the measures *necessary*, not simply convenient, for carrying out its delegated powers.

By a false construction of the theory of our government it had been contended that congress might do incidentally what it was confessed it could not do directly. It has the right to establish post offices and post roads, and therefore it was contended that it might undertake any work of internal improvement that seemed useful. It had no right to lay a protective tariff; but inasmuch as it might lay imports for the purposes of revenue, it was claimed it might lay them to double the amount needed for the revenue, and so lay them as to tax one portion of the community to enhance the profits of another, and in point of fact, so as to affect all the business relations of the whole community. By means of its connection with banks and banking business the government had become connected with the business concerns of every individual citizen. By these deviations from the constitution of the country, the general government had centralized all power in its own hands. The internal improvement system was vetoed, the so-called American system was modified, compromised and dismissed, and now to finish the work, it was resolved to disconnect the government from banks and banking agency, by passing the sub-treasury bill.

Moreover ; the government may impose taxes and collect revenues for defraying expenses incurred in the legitimate exercise of its constitutional powers, but it cannot use its revenues, or suffer them to be used, for any other purpose. When, then, it deposits its revenues in a bank, whether state or national, it uses its revenues,

or suffers them to be used, as the basis of loans to the business part of the community. This is to collect revenues for one purpose and to appropriate them to another.*

The bill became a law in the next congress. Brownson's first assurance in this connection was given by the following letter from Calhoun, which also gives some account of how Mr. Hunter came to be chosen speaker of the House of Representatives.

“ WASHINGTON, 30th December, 1839.

“ My dear sir,—You may dismiss all apprehension in relation to the independent treasury. Its adoption is certain, with the specie feature. I would not be surprised, if it should pass with the acquiescence of a large portion of the opposition. My friends are firm to a man.

“ In regard to the election of the speaker, it is but justice to the administration to say, that the great body of their friends, I have no doubt, were sincere in their desire to take up Mr. Pickens; but he was detained in consequence of the sickness of his wife, and an impression prevailed that he would not be here in time to take the chair, if elected.

“ Mr. Hunter was elected simply because it was ascertained that neither Mr. Jones, nor Mr. Lewis could be; the former on account of some objection to the caucus nomination, and the latter, it is said, owing to some political jealousy on the part of a few on account of his being a states rights man.

“ In this state of things, the Whigs seeing they could not elect their man cast their votes on Mr. Hunter, which

* See the article in full in *Brownson's Works*, vol. xv, p. 85.

with a portion of the states rights votes, elected him. The only reason that I could see why they should prefer him to any other of the party to which he belonged, is that he had been opposed in his district, because he would not declare that he would support Mr. Van Buren's reelection, though he had declared openly against Clay. On this slender ground the Whigs claimed him, after the election, and owing, I suppose to the same cause, preferred him when they could not succeed in electing their own candidate. In any other respect, except that he had been opposed by a large portion of the administration party and therefore voted for by a large portion of the Whigs, his position is identical with Mr. Lewis, Mr. Pickens, and other states rights men. I cannot doubt but that his acts will show a firm adherence to his principles. If they do not, I shall be much deceived.

"As to myself, I deeply regretted the whole affair. My opinion has been uniform that my friends aiming with me, at the restoration of the constitution, should be perfectly passive on all questions connected with office, and to unite cheerfully on any candidate presented by the administration, to whom there was no decided objection. Taking this view, I regret that Mr. Jones, who is a very worthy man, was not elected on the first ballot. It would have allayed jealousies, and given us more control over measures

"I need hardly say to you, that all the reports to which you alluded, with another equally absurd, that I favored the Harrisburgh convention, are without the least foundation. For what purpose, or by whom they have been put into circulation, I am ignorant. I am moving towards a single end, to bring back the govern-

ment, as far as constitutional measures are concerned, to where it was when it commenced.

* * * * *

"Yours truly,

"J. C. CALHOUN.

"O. A. BROWNSON, Esq."

March 4, 1841, W. H. Harrison became President. As he mounted the steps of the Capitol to deliver his address, the goddess of Liberty on the dome was said to have dropped from her hand the scroll of the Constitution. Mr. Harrison's address was unjustly censured at the time as non-committal, but all that the president on his inauguration can with propriety announce of the measures he proposes to recommend is confined to the statement of his views of the principles of the government he is to administer and the spirit in which he intends to administer them. Gen. Harrison, however, died on the 4th of April next ensuing, and John Tyler became president. He was but recently a convert to the Whig party from the Virginia states-rights democracy, and Whigs and Democrats were equally in doubt for some time what would be his policy in administering the government. Repairing at once to Washington, Tyler issued an inaugural address which was satisfactory to the Whigs; and called an extra session of Congress, which met at the end of May. His vacillation in the matter of the national bank bills was productive of no very great evil, as he vetoed them; but his vetoes were applauded by the Democrats and denounced by the Whigs.

The following letters from Calhoun show what were then the Democrats' anticipations.

“ WASHINGTON, 6th June, 1841.

“ Dear sir,—I was absent on a visit to my son in Alabama when your letter of the 10th of April reached my residence, and had not leisure to answer it during the short interval I remained at home after my return.

“ I read with pleasure the article on Distribution. My opinion remains unchanged on the subject of hereditary property.

“ There is great uncertainty as to what course Mr. Tyler will take. Many of his friends assert with confidence that he will veto the bank bill, should one pass. I have no doubt, if left to his own inclination, he would be thoroughly state rights, but he has voluntarily accepted office at the hands of those who differ *in toto* from him. It remains to be seen, whether he will have the virtue and the courage to extricate himself from his embarrassing position. I am not without hope; and in the meantime, I hope nothing will be done on our part calculated to throw him more into the hands of our opponents. Much, very much is in his power. He can turn the scale. I very much regret, that your collector should prove so vindictive as to extend his proscriptive policy to you. I had expected better things from him. I shall be anxious to see your July number. The true relation between the states and the general government is a question of the deepest interest. It is really surprising that it should be so imperfectly understood even by the Republican party, when it involves, properly understood, what distinguishes them from their opponents.

“ You will see in the Globe of this morning an account of the proceedings of the Republican party in

Charleston. The report and resolutions speak the voice of the state. I cannot but be much gratified with the kind feeling towards me on the part of the distinguished members of our party in Boston to whom you refer. Next to the approbation of my own conscience, that of the intelligent and patriotic is the highest reward I can wish for the discharge of my duties to my country.

With great regard, I am yours truly,

“J. C. CALHOUN.”

“SENATE CHAMBER, 11th September, 1841.

“My dear sir,—I send enclosed my speech on the distribution bill. I regard the measure as the very worst ever passed by Congress. My speech gives a pretty full view of the points on which it touches, but there are others of great importance not touched, or, at least, not exhausted. I hope you will press the subject in your Review. There is none richer in materials.

“The veto will probably seal the fate of the bank bill, certainly for the next three years. It is a great gain, but will, I fear, be gained not without great cost. If Mr. Tyler had also vetoed the distribution bill, and thrown himself on Republican ground, it would have been, indeed, a great triumph to our party and principles, but he may, I fear, take a middle course. If he should, and organize his cabinet in conformity, it would cause a great confusion, in which I fear the Republican party and its principles will suffer greatly. I hope, however, for the best, and will cheerfully give support to Mr. Tyler as far as my principles will admit, but without involving myself

in the fate of his administration, unless it should come out explicitly on state rights Republican principles.

“ With great respect, I am, etc.,

“ J. C. CALHOUN.

“ O. A. BROWNSON, Esq.”

During the extra session of Congress of 1840, Brownson opposed the bill for distributing the proceeds of the sales of public lands among the states and territories.* The bill was passed at Mr. Tyler's extra session. In his Review for January 1842, Brownson made a second strong argument for its repeal in support of Wright, Benton, and Calhoun, and against Webster, Clay and, Crittenden. The bill was repealed within a year from its approval by the president.†

Brownson made some complimentary remarks of R. Barnwell Rhett in alluding to his speech, to which the South Carolina congressman replied.

“ May dear sir,—Your extravagant estimate of my speech I can only attribute to our strong similarity of opinion on the subject it discusses, and your very great enthusiasm of temperament, which if it is sometimes the blessing, is oftener the curse of those who possess it;—but without which nothing great or glorious in active life, can be accomplished for our race. If I needed encouragement to sustain me in the advocacy of the great truths which lie at the basis of our free institutions, and which I have endeavoured to elucidate in this speech, it would be the strong voice of cheering and approbation

* Brownson's Works, vol. xv, p. 149. *Distribution and the Public Lands.*

† Ibid p. 202. *The Distribution Bill.*

from him, whom the first mind in England has pronounced to be the greatest genius in America. Yours is not a mind which schools have made, or schools can control; and if it sometimes errs—and what mind is infallible?—it will be from the glare of its innate light, and not the false beacons which other minds have erected; and although I believe you have erred in your too partial estimate of my late effort, I assure you I would rather have the commendation your letter contains, than those of all the literati and politicians of Boston and Harvard combined.

“ Believe me, dear sir,

“Yours with high esteem and respect,

“ R. B. RHETT,

“ June 8th, 1841.

“ MR. O. A. BROWNSON.”

Soon after the receipt of Mr. Calhoun's letter of October 31st, 1841,* Brownson began to work with the view of influencing the Democratic Party in favor of the nomination of Calhoun for President at the convention to be held in 1844. One of the leaders, if not the chief, of this movement was Mr. Lewis of Alabama, whose recommendations, or instructions, are here given.

“ HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, June 8th, 1842.

“ My dear sir,—I received your letter by due course of mail, and have been prevented by press of business from answering it sooner. I am glad to hear you are in favour of our friend Calhoun for President. He is *the man for the times*, and the only one, who I think can

* Ante p. 302.

reform and bring back our government to its old Republican position. He is the *decided* choice of the Democratic party in Congress, and in any one of the Southern States is much stronger than any other man. Besides, he has active, intelligent, and numerous friends everywhere, and yet strange the universal fear is that he is unpopular and cannot be nominated. This results from his late weak position with the Democratic party, each one not perceiving that the very causes which incline his mind to Mr. C—— incline thousands of others. Besides, it is felt, that the drill of party is for Mr. V. Buren, and many think that by this alone, —by the opinion that as a *matter of course* he is to be nominated that no one need oppose him, but all this will yield to the slightest touch of free investigation,—and the idea of bringing forward for the *third* term a *defeated* candidate for the presidency, against whom a majority of the people are already actually committed, will be found to be a sad mistake.

“ I think our time to move has come, but we should do so cautiously and with great kindness to Mr. V. Buren. A good article from the Northern press would be the thing. I will send you in a few days something like an outline which, if you will fill up will tell here and through the country. In the meantime I send you one in a Pennsylvania paper which I hope you will have republished in one of your Democratic papers, with a short introductory notice calling attention to it and suggesting some one to be run at the North on the same ticket for Vice-President. Woodbury, Wright, and Buchanan have all been named. ‘The more the merrier,’ but I think Woodbury would suit your people best. Throw then a short article connecting Woodbury’s name

with Mr. C——n's in one of your leading papers, being careful at the *same time* to *conceal* the source from whence it comes. I can have the article republished here and then have it go through the Union. I will write you again and more fully in a few days.

“Keep these views as *confidential*, and believe me your friend,

“DIXON H. LEWIS.

“O. A. BROWNSON, Esq.”

“HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, June 16th, 1842.

“*Confidential*.

“My dear sir,—Yours of the 11th inst. has been received, in which you make no mention of the article I sent you to be republished, proposing to head it with a few words proposing Woodbury as Vice-President. I agree with you that Wright is the stronger man, but he nor his friends are as free *now* to move as Woodbury and his friends. They are too much complicated with Van Buren. Woodbury is the independent point on which we can move, although many of our friends are looking to Wright, and many others to Buchanan, and what is better, the friends of *each* of them are *looking to us*, and while therefore we can, as preference dictates, connect either one or the other with Mr. Calhoun, it is our policy distinctly to take up neither, but leave it to the convention to settle the matter. Each one will strengthen Mr. Calhoun as long as the friends of each aspire to the position.

“I think we should go for Mr. Calhoun for a single term, and select a vice-president to whom we shall stand

pledged 'si bene se gesserit,' for the presidency. Public caution will require that the vice-president shall be no *man of straw*, after the manner of the present incumbent. Lest you may not have received the article I sent, I again send you another, and suggest that it be published immediately with a few lines connecting Woodbury's name with the vice-presidency. Be careful that you do not let even Woodbury's best friends know at whose instance it is published. The state of our negotiations with some of them make this desirable.

In the meantime you can be preparing the article I propose you to write. When I spoke of an *outline* I intended to have procured one from a master hand in reference to the cast of an article which should be adapted to the *whole union*. I am disappointed however in procuring it, and will endeavour to supply its place by some hints of my own, to be worked up into an article under your hand, which like a thing of life shall *speak* the feelings of the Democracy North and South. I know no one so well qualified as yourself saving your want of that *intimate knowledge* of the *temper* of the different sections on this point.

Then I propose you write an article which shall in reading not occupy more than forty minutes, or if you think better, three or four numbers, of twenty minutes each, in favor of Mr. C— for the Presidency. As the article is intended for all sorts of readers it ~~must~~ be short, or perhaps it is better to have it broken into short numbers. First draw a likeness of Mr. VanBuren which his friends shall feel to be kind if not flattering. In the same kind spirit show that so far as his future reputation is concerned, he has nothing move to acquire from

the bare possession of office, that in his fidelity to his principles even in *defeat* he has acquired a reputation greater than all his administrative acts, that after securing the *undivided and cordial* support of the Democracy for two terms that his *friends* should be satisfied, that his repeated declarations prove that *he* would be (having often said that he did not wish or expect again to be brought forward), that with the exception of the State Department to which taste and habit drew much of his attention that Mr. V. B. has not the *administrative talent* to add to his reputation, that he is rather fond of his ease, and pays but little attention to the ordinary *executive administration* which never was in so bad a condition as the present, that he was not fortunate in the selection of agents for these purposes, that he may be expected again to rely on the same men, that we want a man of energy, industry, and *administrative* talent to *reform* the action of the Government, to lessen its expenditure, and to purge it of its corruptions.

"But mainly urge the *injustice* to Wright, Woodbury, Buchanan, and other prominent men of the party, to run Mr. V. B. for the *third* term. Eight years is too long for the Republican doctrine of rotation. It allows but little more than *one President to one generation*. It is subject to the objection of making the *first* term an electioneering cycle of four years to secure the second. It is a continuation not merely of the same President, but very much of the same agents, the same influence, and the same patronage. The *Whigs* propose to correct this by an amendment of the constitution. That would be a constitutional restriction of the rights of the people to which the Democrats are opposed, but the public senti-

ment of *both* parties is inclining to the *one term* as a general rule of practice, only to be departed from in those great emergencies which define themselves, and of which the people would judge. The sentiment in favor of one term would be grossly violated by giving to Mr. V. B. the party support for twelve years. If it is good for him is it not also good for Col. Johnson, and cannot he claim as a matter of right as he was *defeated* on the *same* ticket before, he should run on the same ticket again for the *third term*. If he fails for the Presidency, this will be his course.

“None of these reflections can affect Mr. C——. He is, I assure you, truly in favor of the *one term* to apply to *himself*. He ought to be presented for a *single term*, and wishes to be so presented, but his friends dislike it. I think it ought to be *urged* in this address.

“As to Mr. Calhoun, you can better present than I can suggest the reasons for his preference. One important one is his *administrative talent*. In this he was not excelled by even Napoleon himself. In this we want not merely a sound man, but *must have a Reformer*. In economy the same arguments apply. We must not only *not increase*, but we must *diminish* the expenses of the government. See his first speech at this session on that subject. Another reason of great force, is the position of the South, the weaker section,—the object of fanatical attack, of tariff cupidity. With other sections democracy is a question of policy; with the South of *Existence*. Nothing would strengthen the citadel of her rights so much as the moral power which at such a time as this would place a southern man at the head of the government.

"I beg you, my dear sir, to excuse this crude, hurried and disjointed line of reflections which I have sketched at my table amid constant interruptions, and with so little care that I have not looked back a single line. If in this jumble of material, you like a single idea, use it, if not, throw it all aside. But one thing I ask that you write as soon as you can conveniently. V. Buren's strength lies in the idea that as a *matter of course* he is to be the candidate. Under the policy of lying still, many who prefer another, are gradually *acquiescing* in it, as one of the stern decrees of party. Mr. Calhoun's friends have been silent too long. He is infinitely stronger than V. Buren, but if nothing is said or done, the mere machinery of party will force Van on us. Hoping soon to hear from you, and that you will begin the movement without delay,

"I am your friend,

"DIXON H. LEWIS.

"O. A. BROWNSON, Esq.

"P. S.—My advice is to conceal your agency in the matter, if possible, from the editor himself. Might it not be well to throw the article, if you can, into a leading Democratic paper in Maine or New Hampshire? It would come with more force, because of the idea that it might be backed by the Democracy of the State."

Mr. Rhett, whose antipathy to Mr. Van Buren was as strong as his attachment to Calhoun, wrote as follows:

"My dear sir,—A letter shown to me by Mr. Lewis from you, induces me to write this letter.

"I enclose you the proceedings of the Whigs of Ohio nominating Mr. Clay for President and Mr. Davis

of Massachusetts for Vice-President. Read carefully the resolutions relating to Mr. Van Buren—in which they congratulate themselves and the country on the issues which his nomination for the presidency will make—from which you will see that should we determine to make him our candidate, we will have to assume the defensive position and go back to the old issue of 1840 on which we have already been beaten—and beaten in Ohio, by some 20,000.—South Carolina can throw her weight for any candidate the Democratic party may bring out—but in Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina I know from personal communication that the Whigs hope for success solely in the nomination of Mr. V. B——, and the conception of his personal characteristics in the South is so different and opposite to those most admired there, that his personal popularity is far below his party's strength, and thousands (whether judging rightly or not is immaterial) will vote against the man whilst sympathising with the party. Thousands now will vote against him on the score of consistency; and if you add to this that we will have to defend the appropriations and expenditures during his administration, which are indefensible, and if defensible, ought not to be defended if we intend to effect any reform in the government—and on all the other issues of 1840—standing army and all—we must take the part of apology or justification. What chance will we have of success? and if we succeed what chance will there be for bringing the government back to its ancient simplicity and economy? If we are wise enough to fight the next presidential battle on the issues the Whigs have made by their legislation, assume and keep the position of aggressors which we are—our success

will be undoubted. But we cannot do this with Mr. V. B. as our candidate.

“My desire is not merely to restore the Democratic party to power, but to reform this party as well as bring it into power. It has long needed reformation. The government is rotten in all its branches, corrupt and perverted in administration as well as legislation. Mr. V. B. has not the spirit and genius of a reformer. I know of but one man in the party who possesses the qualities the occasion requires. You know whom I mean. And even he, when he stirs the muck-heap, will see worms and snakes in myriads which will crawl up on him, and endeavour to stifle him.

“I throw out these hasty views. If you would write a series of essays in the Boston Post, it may do immense good.

“Yours with high esteem and respect,

“R. B. RHETT.

“MR. BROWNSON.”

Among those who coöperated in the Calhoun movement, no one was more enthusiastic than John Hecker of New York. He had assisted in the original organization of the Loco-foco party in Tammany Hall, had belonged to the Workingmen's party and Wm. H. Channing's congregation, and strongly sympathised with all Brownson's views in religion and politics and reform. His youngest brother, Isaac, was also much interested in the same movements. The latter wrote :

“NEW YORK, August 30, 1843.

“Dear friend,—My brother addressed to you a letter as regards your writing our address for the mass meeting that is to be held in the Park under the impression, I believe, that it was to be held at a later date than is the fact. He with many others thought that the convention of the delegates at Syracuse was to be held on the 15th and instead of the 15th it is to be held on the 5th, and for the purpose of influencing the convention and to show to the country the great number of Mr. Calhoun's friends, they have resolved to hold the meeting in the Park on the 4th, a day previous to the Syracuse Convention. Is it possible that you can send the address here in time for the meeting which will be Monday afternoon, 6 o'clock? For it is a matter of great importance as you are fully aware that this being the first demonstration of this character it should be one which will tell the country through, as we have all reason to hope it will in numbers as doubtless it will by the character of the address which will come from your able and powerfully impressive pen.

“When there has been a reballoting on account of the irregularity of procedure or a tie Mr. Calhoun has on the whole come off conqueror! It adds much, very much to give one confidence in the strength of his friends to be aware that this was all done without any preconcerted action on their part,—it was spontaneous,—while on the other hand, all the party machinery and caucusing were in the hands of Van Buren's friends who are not remarkable for their tender consciences in party tactics.

“Not expecting John home before next Saturday, he being now in the country, and not knowing precisely how or what he wrote to you, you will be able with this

remark to account for my addressing you on this subject in his stead, and whatever misapprehension I may have fallen under as regards the contents of his letter.

“Will you be so kind as to inform us immediately whether you will have the address on here in time? For I suppose they will have to make other preparation in its stead if it does not come in time.

“Can you let us know by the first returning mail?

“Remember me to your wife and to your son Orestes and family.

“Yours with deep respect and love,

“ISAAC.

“P. S.—Will you give the enclosed to Mr. Greene to send on its value in your addresses when published? I wish them to distribute and to be read by your friends.

“I.”

Brownson having sent the address in time for the mass meeting, an additional one was wanted after that meeting, as Hecker writes:

NEW YORK, Sept. 6, 1843.

“Dear Friend,—You will perceive by the paper sent with this letter that a committee of three were appointed by the Calhoun mass meeting in the Park, one of which was my brother John, to draft an address to the people of the United States to set forth the grounds of preference for John C. Calhoun the democratic candidate for the Presidency. This was done with the private understanding that you would with pleasure furnish such an address, if circumstances would permit—the time set for it you will see by the proceedings is indefinite.

“Have we presumed too much? If not, please to let us know what time you will have the address ready.

“The meeting that was held was in every respect all that his friends could have wished, in its numbers, respectability, and enthusiasm, and it is now the purpose of his friends to follow it up by a proper plan of organization. Mr. Brady, one of our most talented speakers, and one who has always struck me as destined to make an impress upon his country's history, quoted your remarks upon Mr. Calhoun's rare study of the theory and principles of our government as coming from one of the greatest men in our Country.

“I feel too often that I am not within two hours' ride of your presence when my heart and head are full to overflowing, but I feel an inexpressible gratitude and an unfathomable thankfulness for your kindness towards me and the great benefit of your influence—May my conduct be accordingly.

“I expect to see Wm. Channing on Tuesday. He asked with great interest about you and your circumstances. He is still in the protestant epoch of sectarianism or individualism. He is Catholic in heart, Protestant in head. If once he gets his head, heart, and hands in unison, in harmony, what beauty, what music would come forth. Dr. Vethake has called to see me twice since I have been home, and I have been to see him. He is very poor, his sensibility is very delicate, and he is a profound Swedenborgian. The latter is my interpretation of his present crisis, for so I consider it, for his organization being now so extremely sensitive, he thinks, feels, hears, and sees more than his constitution will permit. He is one who I commune with deeper, and more, than

any one I have met with since my return. The Dr. is much altered. I have seen Edward Palmer three or four times. His formula is to act in society and win best you can. He has ceased to act against it. I love him very much.

"The family remember you with lovely affection.

"Remember me to your kind wife.

"Yours sincerely,

"ISAAC.

"P. S. Will you please answer this as soon as convenient?

"My health is good, my diet is unleavened bread and fruits.

"Your addresses I have just received. I have glanced through one. What will the Tammany Democracy say? What of Sullivan's note? Renewing of the B. Q. R. I hope so. So did Wm. Channing."

Mr. Rhett, on receiving a copy of the address, wrote:

"WASHINGTON.

"My dear sir,—I have just received a pamphlet on a 'National Convention' from New York, but which the style will not allow me to impute to any one but yourself. I have just put out another on the same subject, which is already printed; but I prefer it should come out first tomorrow in the columns of the Spectator. You will find many of our views alike, so much the better for beating them, if true, into the popular mind. I only foresee the compromise, between the larger and smaller states, which you state to exist. Your pamphlet is excellent, and a few more such will knock caucus machinery, as it did in the election of Genl. Jackson, into atoms. There

....

was one course which I think would have given Mr. V. B. the Presidency—and that was, assenting to the district plan of representation, and settling the tariff rightly at the approaching Session of Congress. He has already stumbled at the first, and I doubt not will send his heels clear up at the second. I consider now either of us as likely to be President as Mr. V. B. He would have run heavy any how, but he had the best and most boastful backing, and would have been put on the turf; but this question of convention, and the issue between the smaller and larger states, I think, will rule him off. We have got the cause of the people and the constitution, and we must prevail.

“I am here to give vigor and life to the Press set up at this place, which has been gasping on the eve of dissolution, ever since established. We want an able press in New York. Cannot Boston and New York put up and sustain one at least until the fight is over?

“Believe me, dear sir,

“Yours with high esteem,

“R. B. RHETT.

“September 12th, 1843.

“MR. O. A. BROWNSON.”

It was proposed to start a paper in Calhoun's interest in New York, and the Heckers were anxious that Brownson should accept the position of its editor. While connected with the Democratic Review, it had seemed to him a good plan to edit a daily paper in New York, advocating the interests of his favorite candidate; but it had lately become plain that Brownson's views of

the origin, office, and limitation of government were not in accord with the new theory of popular sovereignty which had taken hold of all the politicians, Whig and Democratic, north of Mason and Dixon's line. He was hardly required to deliberate, however, on the matter, for the letter proposing was almost immediately followed by another recalling the suggestion, because it had been decided not to have a regular editor, but to leave his duties to one of the contributors, there being difficulty in collecting funds. Hecker's letter in reference to the new paper is as follows :

"NEW YORK, September 14. 1843.

"Dear friend,—The friends of J. C. Calhoun intend to start a paper in this city, for Mr. C. as a candidate for the presidency, and are now making arrangements. For such a purpose they have the assurance of \$5,000 to commence it with, and are now desirous of securing an able editor. You having expressed a willingness to occupy such a place, some time ago, we thought perhaps you might be willing to accept this present opportunity, which is now offered to you by those who have the matter in hand.

"If you are willing to accept this offer what conditions are necessary to your acceptance of it ?

"If you are willing to accept it with certain necessary conditions, such conditions of acceptance we will present to them and let you know the result as soon as possible. If they cannot fully comply we will inform you what they can do.

"Would it not be more commanding and better suited to your tastes if you should receive the hospital appoint-

ment, to start the B. Q. R.? Much as I would desire your coming on here, still I would regret much more the loss of your pen in that higher sphere which the Review would be the channel of, and the newspaper not. Still this may present advantages to you that I am not aware of. The paper I believe would take and the men are responsible men.

“There will be a mass meeting of all the Districts, on which occasion it is their intention to present the address from your pen.

“Alcott and Fuller have been here five days. They started for home yesterday morning. They occupied their time in visiting different individuals, and holding conversations. They held three while they were here, one at Wm. Channing's place, and there were present Channing, Margaret Fuller, Vethake, and Alcott. How they took, I know not, for if they are the ‘newness’ to a Boston transcendental audience, what must they be to a New York one? They made our place their home while they were here.

“I have read your address and I feel it is precisely what we want,—what we ought to have had before, and what we should practise now. All that have read it, like it, and I intend to leave one for Park Godwin who inquired of me particularly what you are doing, etc.

“We are all well.

“My mother, sister, and brothers wish me to remember them to you.

“While I remain yours,

“Truly in deep affection,

“ISAAC.

"P. S.—Wm. Channing's paper, the Present, will be out in a few days. It will be monthly."

Brownson's connection with Dorr's rebellion in Rhode Island was misrepresented by political opponents to his prejudice. He had been for some years past an occasional visitor to Providence, where he delivered lectures and orations, and had many friends, among whom was Thomas W. Dorr, a lawyer and member of the assembly, and, after 1837, a Democrat. Rhode Island had never framed a state constitution, but continued after our revolution to administer the government under the charter granted by Charles II in 1663, which, it was said, restricted suffrage, by a freehold qualification, to about one third of the adult male population of the state.

In January, 1841, Brownson accepted an invitation from Dorr and his friends to address the suffrage association at Providence. Believing at that time that the association's only design was to act on public opinion and by the force of opinion to compel the charter government to take measures for the formation and adoption of a more liberal constitution, he had encouraged the formation of the association, and now in his address he advocated an extension of suffrage as essential to the perfection of the political system adopted in this country.

The qualified voters of Rhode Island having rejected the constitutions submitted by the general assembly for their ratification, the suffrage party, with Dorr at its head, called a convention of delegates to be elected by the whole adult male population to frame a state constitution. This constitution was submitted for popular ratification, and was ratified, according to the suffragists' claim, by a

majority of the people voting. The suffrage party held an election under this constitution for state officers, and Dorr was elected governor. On the 3rd of May, 1842, Dorr's government was organized at Providence, and Governor King, the charter governor's at Newport. Dorr requested Brownson to write a letter to strengthen his position with the people, and received one with strong approbation of his principle and encouragement to him to stand firm in his position. Both governors appealed to arms ; but Dorr's troops dispersed when attacked, and he fled from the state. This was

“The great battle
Of Federal Hill,
Fought and won
Without firing a gun.”

Later he returned and stood trial, and was sentenced to imprisonment for life.

Brownson knew that the whole proceedings under Dorr's constitution were illegal and revolutionary ; but his excuse was that there was no legal and orderly way by which the necessary amendments to the charter could be enacted. Without admitting the validity of such excuse, it is proper to say that he had been misinformed, as he would have seen if he had taken the precaution of examining that charter ; for it came out, after Dorr's failure, that the limitation of suffrage to a freehold qualification was not a provision of the charter, but an act of the legislature.

Van Buren, Senator Allen, Senator Benton, Governor Hubbard, Governor Morton, Bancroft, McNeil, Rantoul, Hallett, and many of their friends supported

Dorr, and maintained the strict justice and legality of his proceedings. As many of these were lawyers, Brownson was, doubtless, to some extent, influenced by their opinion. But Elisha R. Potter, a representative in Congress from Rhode Island, in an able pamphlet, demonstrated that no friend of law and government should countenance, in any form or manner, the proceedings of the suffrage party, and thereafter Brownson, on several occasions, expressed his dissent from them, and maintained that, so long as the legitimate administrators of a government observe the laws of the state, and administer the government in accordance with them, honestly, and with a single eye to the maintenance of justice, all resistance to the civil authority is criminal.*

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DEMOCRATIC REVIEW.—BROWNSON'S QUARTERLY REVIEW.—SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PEOPLE.—CALHOUN —THE PROTECTIVE POLICY.

"THE DEMOCRATIC Review," a monthly magazine, started at Washington in the summer of 1837, by Langtree and O'Sullivan, was afterwards dated from New York and published by the Langleys, J. L. O'Sullivan continuing as editor. In May, 1842, O'Sullivan wrote Brownson : "The idea has occurred to me that perhaps a mutually satisfactory arrangement might be made at the present time between us respecting the future

* *Origin and Ground of Government*, Brownson's Works, vol. vi, p. 296, and *The Suffrage Party in Rhode Island*, Ibid. p. 508.

publication of the two works edited by us respectively, for the promotion of the great and holy cause of our common principles. . . . It strikes me that your admirable Review might be advantageously merged into the Democratic Review,—I purchasing your list of subscribers at a fair rate, and you continuing a contributor, at a rate of compensation which you should not have reason to complain of on the score of liberality, with your name appended to your articles, if you think proper. . . . I desire during the course of the next year to make a very strenuous effort to extend, and establish, on a wider basis than the present (though that is very satisfactory), the circulation of the Democratic Review,—and I think that more will be secured for the great objects toward which our aims are directed by the course I suggest, by establishing and sustaining well one work of this character, than by a division of our means and efforts upon two. . . . If you and your publishers are favorably disposed to this suggestion, there will probably be little difficulty between us in relation to the details.”

The details were agreed on and at the end of the volume of the Boston Quarterly Review for 1842, Brownson announced its discontinuance. He offered no valedictory to his readers; for, he had no wish to take leave of them, nor expectation that they and he were about to part company. The frank manner, in which he had spoken, the honesty, and truthfulness of his utterances to himself, had given his readers an opportunity of knowing him personally. The five volumes of the Review now completed, the greater part of which he had himself written, must be taken very much in the light of a private journal. He had spoken as he thought and felt at

time of writing, as unreservedly as if he had been writing in a private diary, for no eye but his own, Happy is he who can so speak, with less to regret on review, or with less that must expose him to ridicule, censure, or misconstruction. In these volumes he had embodied five years of his life,—his thoughts, his likes and dislikes, his loves and his hates, his aspirations and hopes. They had their faults; for, what life is perfect? but they had proceeded from a living soul, and a warm heart, and they had in them, let the world say what it will, something of vitality. Crude, ill-tempered, hasty, rash, impetuous, they may have been at times; but when criticism has done its work, when the mists of prejudice have been dissipated, and they stand forth for what they really are, they will be seen to bear the marks of one, who to many faults joined at least the one virtue of being able, in good report and in evil, in weakness and in strength, in poverty and disgrace, to be true to the great idea which had possessed him almost from the cradle,—that of man's moral intellectual, and physical amelioration on earth.

These volumes mark an important epoch in the life of the editor. Friendless and alone he started that Review; almost friendless and alone he continued it for five years; and he parted with it not without a pang like that with which one looks for the last time upon the face of a dear friend. Nevertheless he owed to that Review some years of a life, for the most part dark and full of trouble, of very high enjoyment, intellectual and moral. And if it raised him up enemies, it also brought him some warm-hearted friends, on whom he could count, and whose friendship he considered ample remuneration for

any measure of abuse that had been or could be received. It is perhaps wrong to say that he had continued the work almost without friends. Every one who continued to go with him became in some sort a personal friend, and he believed that the great body of the American people would one day be among the number of his friends; for he had a true American heart, and felt a fraternal relation with them all.

The first of Brownson's contributions to the Democratic Review was the criticism of Schmucker's *Psychology** in the number for October, 1842, followed soon after by a series of articles setting forth his *Synthetic Philosophy*.† But the readers of the Democratic Review wanted magazine articles, not philosophical treatises, and O'Sullivan frankly told him in a letter dated the 12th of February, 1843, "that the proportion of those who are pleased with the papers on Synthetic Philosophy, seems to our observation here very small in comparison with that of those who care little for a profound and abstract serial treatise of that kind on metaphysics, and who are therefore much disappointed of the expectation they had entertained of being interested in your articles. Especially now for the coming three or four concluding numbers of the year,‡ it is necessary to aim at the object of interesting and satisfying the great mass of the subscribers—whose continuance for the next is so important. The greatest '*entertainment* of the greatest number,'—to vary the Benthamic formula,—becomes at this time in particular the consideration of the highest moment. The article you once spoke of on our friends of the newness

* Brownson's Works, vol. i, p. 19. † Ibid. p. 58.

‡ The year ended in June.

—and on the German philosophers—would come better into play at this time.”

Discontinuing, therefore, his exposition of the synthetic philosophy, Brownson began writing a series of articles for the *Democratic Review* on the origin and ground of government.* Politics, as a science, had been universally neglected, and it would be difficult, if not indeed impossible, to name a single work of any scientific value, on politics, or the principles and constitution of government, written by an American. He did not expect to be able to do full justice to the great subject he opened, by a few hasty magazine articles; but he did hope to provoke such as had the leisure and education requisite, to turn their attention to the study of the fundamental problems of government, and by so doing, end the political empiricism and the imitation of foreign quackery, which were the curse and the reproach of our state and federal governments. This series of essays was afterwards re-written, and with some additions, published under the title of the “*American Republic*.” † There is little, if any, variation in the doctrines and views put forth at periods a quarter of a century apart; only additional questions arising from our civil war and its results had to be discussed in the later work.

These doctrines and opinions were, however, widely diverse from those of the editor of the *Democratic Review* and from those of a large number, perhaps nearly all, of its subscribers. O’Sullivan’s repeated complaints on this score determined Brownson to break off his connection with the *Democratic Review*. To this

* Ibid. vol. xv, p. 296.

† *Brownson’s Works*, vol. xviii, p. 1.

O'Sullivan consented ; but when Brownson proposed to revive the Boston Quarterly Review, O'Sullivan's publishers withheld their consent. Brownson therefore named the revised journal Brownson's Quarterly Review, the first number of which appeared on the first of the year 1844, in form very similar to the Boston Quarterly. The opening pages in which he makes his bow to his readers, is very characteristic of the writer, and helps greatly to make his position at that time clear and distinct.

"At the close of the volume for 1842," he begins, "I was induced to merge the Boston Quarterly Review, which I had conducted for five years, in the Democratic Review, published at New York, on condition of becoming a free and independent contributor to its pages for two years. But the character of my contributions having proved unacceptable to a portion of its ultra-democratic subscribers, and having, in consequence, occasioned its proprietors a serious pecuniary loss, the conductor has signified to me, that it would be desirable for my connection with the Democratic Review to cease before the termination of the original agreement. This leaves me free to publish a new journal of my own, and renders it, in fact, necessary, if I would continue my communications with the public. I have no fault to find with the conductor of the Democratic Review, Mr. O'Sullivan,—a gentleman for whom I have a very high esteem. His conduct, so far as I am concerned, has been honorable, even generous ; but my self-respect prohibits me from living on another's generosity, or by means of an engagement profitable only to myself. I am, moreover, not unhappy to terminate an arrangement, into which I reluctantly

entered, and from which I never really augured a favorable issue, and to return home, and, as it were, meet my old friends around my own fireside, where we may talk over matters at our ease, and in our own familiar way.

"I have never been at home in the *Democratic Review*; I have felt all the while that I was among strangers, speaking to a strange audience, who knew not my face, and recognized no familiar tones in my voice. We were not, as the mesmerizers say, in communication. No magnetic chain of sympathy united us, and no household feeling could spring up between us. They looked upon me as a stranger, as an intruder, and seemed to be all the while wishing for my expulsion. Under such circumstances I received as little pleasure as I gave. Joyfully, then, I return home, and, resuming my old familiar speech and dress, meet again the kind and constant friends, who have always stood by me, and cheered me on, from first to last.

"Never had a periodical a better list of subscribers than had the *Boston Quarterly Review*, during the whole term of its existence. They were few, but they were serious, honest, earnest, affectionate. I felt, and still feel, though the faces of most of them are unknown to me, that they were always patient and respectful listeners; always appeared willing to hear what, and all, I had to say. When a clamor was raised against me, which fetched its echoes from one end of the Union to the other, not one of them, to my knowledge, deserted me, or stopped his subscription, because he found me advocating offensive doctrines. Many of them have signified a wish that I would speak to them again through a journal of my own, from my own chair, not from that of another. Many of

them, I trust, I shall meet again ; for the bond that unites us, I feel, is proof against time and distance, and against good fortune and evil. It is to them, to the little public that knows me, to whom my voice is familiar, and to whom familiarity has softened its natural harshness, that I chiefly address myself, in this introduction ; and not to a strange public, who know me not, or only know me by uncertain report. I come into the circle of my friends, to exchange kindly greetings and to allow my heart to expand, and to overflow with the warm sentiments, which have, since I went abroad, been pent up, struggling in vain for utterance.

“ We meet again, then, dear friends, after a short separation, and I trust, unchanged. You may have heard strange rumors of me, but I come back what I was. The heart may be sadder, and less buoyant ; but it beats still for the same great moral and social end, and retains all its old faith in God, in Christ, and in human capacity. Believe none of the idle rumors that may have reached your ears. As you have known me, so will you always find me. You have known me too long and too intimately, to give in to the false notion, that I am constantly changing my opinions. They who have not known me formerly, as you knew me, and who gathered my views from isolated extracts from my writings, or from the views of my presumed associates, beginning now to understand really somewhat of my doctrines and purposes, may very well fancy that I have changed, because they do not, upon a better acquaintance, find me what they had figured me to themselves ; but you, who have read me from the first, were always able to find in my writings the germs, at least, of the doctrines

and sentiments, which they now approve, and suppose I have but recently come to entertain.

“Yes, I deny that I have *changed*, though I own that I seem to myself to have *advanced*. I am looking the same way, and have continued in the same direction; but I believe that I am further on than I was. When I first began speaking to the public, I was young, inexperienced, ignorant, though perhaps not remarkably modest; my views were in the process of formation, rather than formed, and my mind, if not void, was at least in a chaotic state. I would fain hope, that years and constant study have, in some degree, reduced the primitive chaos to order, and ripened what was crude. My views have, in general, become more developed and systematized; I seem to myself to understand myself better, to know better what I would effect, and what means I must use to effect it. The young dreamer, the visionary speculator, let me hope, has ripened into the sober, practical man. If this be to change, I doubtless have changed; but in this I have only changed, as all change who are not incapable of profiting by experience. But in all else I seem to myself to be what I was. I bring to this new periodical the same love of independence, the same free thought and free speech, the same unreserved devotion to liberty, the same unquenchable desire for individual and social progress, and the same power to live or to die for it, that made me so many enemies, and so many friends, in the Boston Quarterly Review.

“So much, I have felt that I might, without egotism, be permitted to say of myself, in returning to the field of my former labors, in a review of my own, through which

I may speak out, in my own tones, when and what I please. Of the plan of this journal, of its leading purposes and the general doctrines it will support, I may speak more fully and at greater length.

“The name I have chosen is not chosen from a selfish vanity, but because it is honest and appropriate, and tells the public the simple truth. This is *my* Review; I am its proprietor; its editor: intend to be its principal, if not its sole, writer, and to make it the organ of my own views of truth, on all the great or little topics on which I shall judge it worth my while to discourse. It will be the journal of my own mind, and, doubtless, reflect all its various and varying moods. It may support, and oppose, first one existing party, sect, or school, and then another. It will be bound by none, but be free to approve or to criticise one or all just when and where its editor judges proper. I will be held responsible for nobody's opinions but my own, and nobody shall be held responsible for mine unless he chooses to be. All parties, sects, and schools must be free, so far as I am concerned, to accept what they like, and to reject what they dislike; to praise me when they please, and, when they please, to scold me to their heart's content.

“This said, so that we may start fair, I will add that this Review will have certain fixed principles and leading doctrines, which its readers may always expect to find recognized and supported in its pages. I do not start it with uncertain and fluctuating views, with doctrines that will be taken up to-day and abandoned to-morrow. I have my doctrines determined, and have prescribed to myself a course from which no departure need be expected or apprehended. In this respect, this journal will differ

from the Boston Quarterly Review. When I commenced that Review my views were still, to repeat myself, in the process of formation, rather than formed; and I aimed at exciting inquiry rather than at positive instruction. The greater part of my essays were conceived and written with the view of promoting liberal inquiry and philosophical investigation; not with the view of teaching any regular system of doctrines on any subject whatever. My great and leading design was to awaken the public mind, and to prepare it for the reception of profounder and more kindling views of the destiny of man and society than those I found generally embraced by my countrymen. The community appeared to me to be asleep, overcome by a mental *vis inertiae*; and the first thing they needed was to be aroused, by bold and startling appeals, to a sense of their danger, and stimulated to new and more vigorous efforts for their salvation, moral, intellectual, and social.

“This first work, evidently, would only be necessary for a time; as soon as the public were awakened, it would cease to be useful, and another work would need to be commenced,—that of *positive instruction*. The sleeper awakened asks, ‘What shall I do?’ This question the Boston Quarterly, during the last two years of its existence, it is true, to some extent, attempted to answer; but timidly, and with many misgivings; for I was not yet quite sure of my public, and still less of myself. It was not till the last half year of its continuance that I succeeded in working myself into the clear light of day, and became able, in my own estimate of myself, to pass finally, in my public communications, from the inquirer to the teacher. Then only could I feel that the fetters which had bound

my soul, and against which I had struggled in vain for twenty-five years, were broken, and that I was free; then only was it that the scales seemed to fall from my eyes and that I could see where I stood, and what must henceforth be my direction. The mist vanished, and I could see men in their due proportions and proper forms,—not merely ‘as trees walking.’ Then commenced with me a new intellectual epoch, which must to some extent give a new phase to my writings. This new phase will be represented in this journal, as it has been, in relation to some special subjects, in my contributions, the past year, to the Democratic Review.”

The contract between O’Sullivan and Brownson being abrogated by mutual consent, the two years for which it was entered into not having yet expired, the former made his best apology to his readers in the Democratic Review for December 1843, in an article on Brownson’s contributions, and took occasion to set forth at some length his theory of popular sovereignty, or that of the foundation of the state on mere population. In the April number of Brownson’s Quarterly Review, the editor replies to O’Sullivan’s article. Accepting the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people in what he terms the negative sense, the sense in which the people of this country generally understand it, as the denial of the right of any one man or set of men, any class or caste to rule over the people; he denies it in what he calls the positive sense, the sense of the Democratic Review, which is the sense also in which it is asserted by European liberals and revolutionists, and American demagogues and politicians generally, as the assertion of the absolute right of the people to govern, of their

native, inherent, underived, sovereignty. This, he shows, to be as fatal a doctrine to individual liberty as the kindred absurdity of the divine right of kings as preached by King James Stuart, and confirmed by the Gallican clergy under Lewis XIV. There is nothing in all Brownson's political writings more strenuously and assiduously insisted on than this denial of the sovereignty of the people in the second sense, and nothing more worthy of the earnest consideration of our statesmen, and of the people in general.

Long before his connection with the Democratic Review, Brownson had seen the great danger of the perversion of the American constitution then beginning, and in the course of the half-century and more that has since elapsed, pretty nigh completed. The founders of our Republic were strenuous advocates of the rights of man, that is, of individual, personal freedom. It was the war cry of the eighteenth century. Ancient democracy recognized the freedom of the state, and even of one citizen in face of another; but the freedom of the individual, the rights of man, in the face of the state, were unknown to Greek or Roman Republics. There was recognized in the state nothing but rights: in the citizen, nothing but duties. The great political problem our country had to work out was the conciliation of individual with social, and of social with individual rights, and the subordination of all social and individual action to the laws of justice, the law of nature, or the law of God. The constitution of the United States, as also those of the several states, with their bills of rights, recognize the principle that the people are not absolute, that the citizen has rights they cannot alter or abridge, and which it is

the duty and the glory of authority to preserve untouched. If society has powers the individual must obey, the individual on his side has rights which society must respect; there are some things the body politic may not do, a line that majorities may not pass. These truths were set forth with vigor and clearers in the Boston Quarterly Review, at every opportunity; and when Brownson came to discuss the origin, the rights and duties, and the limitations of government in the pages of the Democratic Review, they naturally found expression there too, to O'Sullivan's infinite disgust and resentment.

Even as far back as 1829, Brownson had the seeds of this opinion germinating in his mind when connected with the workingmen's party, and he wrote in the Democratic Review fourteen years later:

"I am no advocate for the restriction of suffrage and eligibility, the two cardinal points of democracy. True, I understand nothing of the doctrine, that, independent of civil society, makes either a natural right. They are functions not of the *natural* man, but of the *political* man; and are therefore subject to the determination of the state. Without the state they are inconceivable, and can exist only within the state; and therefore, must be subject, not to natural law, but municipal regulation. Let us beware how we confound *equal rights*,—for which a party among us, sneered at and condemned as 'workies,' 'radicals,' 'locofocos,' 'agrarians,' have done nobly in contending, however they may have misjudged as to the proper means of securing them,—with the equal right of every man to have a voice in saying who shall be the law-makers, and what shall be the laws. The equal rights for which these contend belong to

social position, condition, or opportunity, and are, equal chances to equal capacities, and equal rewards to equal works. The workingmen's party,—a party which has never been understood in the country, and which miserable demagogues are even now courting while perverting —meant by equal rights, precisely what I have defined to be freedom for each individual to act out his own individuality or to perform his special function in the social body. They saw that in every society on earth this freedom is restricted, and is nowhere enjoyed; they felt that government should secure this freedom; they felt moreover, that neither of the great political parties of the country did secure, or even labor to secure it; and they came forward from their carpenter's shops, their blacksmith's forges, and shoemaker's benches,—men who were sick of humbug and cant, men of downright earnestness, and demanded in such tones as they were masters of, that henceforth government should be administered so as to secure the end for which, and for which alone, it exists. Noble-minded men! I heard your voice as it rang out from your work-shops, and responded to it from the christian pulpit, where then I stood. It still rings in my ears, and in my heart, and though you have been deceived, denounced, and your noble aspirations blasphemed, I yet dare echo your voice; and amid all the charges of fickleness, of change, and conservatism, with which I am now overloaded, I fear not to say, that never for a moment have I ceased to stand by your cause, and to defend it as the cause of truth, justice, right, patriotism, humanity, religion. Under your flag, which ye flung out to the breeze fourteen years ago this very month, I enlisted; under it I have fought, and in it I will be

wrapped, when laid in my grave. It is not your doctrine, wronged and deceived workingmen, not your doctrine of equal rights, that I condemn ; but that of partisans who have succeeded you, stolen your name and livery ; but only as the hypocrite steals 'the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in.' Ye wanted freedom to perform the functions which God gave you ; to stand up the men ye were made to be ; men of pure heart, of sound mind, and strong hand,—living and toiling for the realization of the will of Heaven, in the manifestation and growth of humanity ; they want a political machine, in which ye shall be the cogs and wheels, or the motive power which they can work for their own political elevation and selfish ends. Hence their fawning and caresses, their protestations of love for the dear people, and their maddening shouts of 'Democracy ! Democracy !' But what do they propose for your benefit ? What have they done to elevate your condition ? They would extend to you the elective franchise ;—ay, but with the express understanding that you are to vote for them, and that they are to turn you off with mere political equality, while they reap all the advantages of the social state. Out upon them ! They are wolves in sheep's clothing.

"Unwearied pains have been taken to prejudice me in the eyes of my old friends, the workingmen, and to have it go forth, that it is their doctrine of equal rights, that I condemn under the names of democracy and loose radicalism. No such thing. We erred in many of our views as to the proper means of gaining the equal rights for which we contended, and had we succeeded in carrying our measures, we should not have succeeded in our end ; but the end itself was true and just, and never was

confounded by one of our number with *the* democracy and equality, which in the pages of this journal, and elsewhere, I have condemned. Trafficking politicians early seized upon some of our watchwords, and gave them a meaning widely different from the one we gave them, and would now fain make it believed, that they are our genuine successors, and that we in disowning them, are disinheriting our own children. Let them tell this to the marines, or to the greenhorns; we who survive of the Workingmen's party of 1829, are too old *salts* to believe them. We know what we struck for, and shall not be wheedled out of it by the mere adoption of our battle-cry." *

A very large part of Brownson's Quarterly Review for this year of 1844, was devoted to politics, both as a science and to practical politics, under which latter branch are included articles urging the Democratic party to nominate Calhoun as its candidate for president. To the last Brownson retained hopes of Calhoun's nomination. One of Brownson's sons walked down to the Ferry, about a mile distant, to fetch the daily papers, the Boston Post and the Boston Atlas, every morning before breakfast, and while the Baltimore Convention was sitting the interest was intense. One morning, as the papers were brought, Brownson eagerly inquired, "Well, have they made a nomination?" "Yes, sir," answered his son, "James K. Polk is nominated." "Who is James K. Polk?" asked Brownson in a tone of the utmost scorn, and indignantly dashed the papers to the floor.

* Brownson's Works, vol. xv, pp. 385-387.

In one of his political articles in his Review for January 1844,* Brownson spoke more admiringly of Calhoun's conduct in nullification times than he would have done after our civil war of secession had made some things in our national constitution plainer than they were before. This drew from Calhoun the confession of his adherence to those same views of the power of one state to nullify national legislation, as is shown by the following letter :

“ FORT HILL, 1st February, 1844.

“ My dear sir,—I am much gratified that you have revived your Review, and wish you to put my name on your list of subscribers. I trust you will be well sustained, and think the prospect is favorable. The publick mind is greatly debased, but I think I see the commencement of a reformation. I speak politically.

“ The first step towards any effectual reform is to put down and disregard party machinery and management. No devise ever was adopted better calculated to gull the community ; to put down all independence and manliness of feeling, and keep the people in ignorance. It originated with Van Buren, and has been carried to perfection by the New York politicians. With them Democracy is but a profession —which is laid aside whenever it stands in the way of obtaining political power. Their reliance is on the spoils and party machinery.

“ I had hoped that the disaster of '37 would have reformed them ; but their conduct for the last 18 months has satisfied me that we have nothing to hope from them. My remarks are limited to the leaders. The great body

* *Calhoun's Life and Speeches.* Brownson's Works, vol. xv, p. 451.

of the party I believe to be sound ; and, if left to themselves, would go right. It is essential to success, while assailing the one, to do justice to the others.

"You will of course understand that what I write is intended for yourself.

"I read your first number with pleasure, especially the two articles of a political character. What you say in reference to myself in connection with nullification I heartily approve. It is the portion of my publick conduct that I should rather be rescued from oblivion than any other.

"Yours truly,

"J. C. CALHOUN.

"Rev. O. A. BROWNSON."

Brownson was not more earnest in supporting Calhoun for the nomination by the Baltimore convention than in opposing Van Buren's claims. Van Buren had ascribed to Brownson the principal share in his defeat in 1840; and in 1844 if Brownson had not an equal share in preventing his nomination, it was not for want of activity and good intention. He wrote the leading political articles in six newspapers against Van Buren and the band of which he was the chief, denouncing the spoils and caucus system perfected, and to no inconsiderable extent founded by him and his more immediate political associates, and of which he was the most conspicuous representative. In opposing Van Buren Brownson had more success than in gaining the nomination for Calhoun, and there were far more that looked with alarm on Van Buren's chances of reëlection than were willing to confide in the South Carolina nullifier. Among this number

was President Wheeler of the University of Vermont, who wrote as follows :

“ UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT,

“ BURLINGTON, February 5, 1844.

“ Dear sir,—I thank you for sending me the first number of your Review. Please enter me as a subscriber. That you are used to being variously understood I learn from your pen ; and by some notice in a newspaper I perceive you have not chanced to escape in your last publication.

“ The doctrine you advance on the ‘ unity of the church,’ as ‘ I understand it’ has been upheld by the Vermont Chronicle since 1826—in almost all the forms in which it would naturally appear in such a publication, but without the Romish phraseology,—indeed in opposition to it. For it was supposed that that phraseology was intended to express, not the idea of a spiritual church, but the power of an ecclesiastical organization to whose organization obedience was required, and not to principles, self-affirmed, in the conscience, in the light of revelation.

“ May I not inquire whether you have not on page 12 misstated to some extent *protestantism* ? In looking for its organic law I do not think we are right in seeking it in the etymology of the word *protest*, but in the doctrine of justifying faith, i. e., justification by the possession of principles of righteousness received by faith in the WORD, in distinction from auricular confession and in distinction from the prescription of any earthly authority whatever. Christ is Head over ALL, and to him as from

him do *principles* go and come. To me this is the only intelligible *doctrine* of progress. Freedom in and through and by these will make progress towards the perfection of Humanity.

"You have, *me judice*, hit Mr. Van Buren very exactly. I wish I could believe as much of Mr. Calhoun. But, I forget, or in one of his metaphysical attempts to justify his State Right doctrine he began with 'all law is restraint.' Ergo the less the better, which I take to be philosophically false. Law is organic, or the *just* action of the organism. Within its sphere the constitution must be so regarded, or to what is loyalty possible? Certainly not to restraint!

"Practically I have only feared Mr. Calhoun, if president, would lend himself in counsels too much to southern *men*, whose characters were not like his own. What think you of Judge McLean?

"I take the liberty to send you two of our recent Vermont productions. You will be please to see them for the vigor and freshness of the thoughts, whatever you may think of their justness.

"Our college is getting on very well so far as appears. With best wishes for success in your new enterprise,

"I am very truly,

"Your most obedient servant,

"J. WHEELER."

During Brownson's connection with the Democratic Review, he received a request from Horace Greeley to "demolish" Atkinson's Political Economy in that journal, with which he would doubtless have complied, had he

contributed to it any thing more than was then in its editor's hands.

" BOSTON, June 16, 1843.

" O. A. BROWNSON.

" Dear sir,—I transmit you a copy of *Atkinson's Political Economy* which we publish in New York to-day, and I ask as a personal favor that you should overthrow its main positions if it be possible, promising to do the same good service to any work on your side of the question that you should indicate,—or at least, do the best I can toward it.

" I do hope you will give us a reading, and then demolish us through the Democratic. We of the Protective school contend that we are not understood, at any rate not fairly presented, by your side of the house. You invariably represent us as advocating local against universal interests, which we deny. Can we not persuade you to pick us up where we lie? It would shorten the controversy immensely. Do oblige us by one wrestle with our main positions as we present them.

" You will perceive that I regard Mr. Atkinson as deficient in his constructive or affirmative positions, but as complete in his negative arguments or overthrow of the Free Trade Economists. I am sure that the doctrines of the schools—their fundamental ideas of the relations of Capital, Labor, Profits, etc.—are vicious and unsound.

" Yours,

" HORACE GREELEY."

In the first volume of Brownson's *Quarterly Review*, the editor did discuss the protective policy; but not so

much for the benefit of Atkinson and Greeley as for that of the Republican Party, now generally known as the Democratic Party. A very large proportion of this party were known to be, and Polk, their candidate for president, was pretty generally believed to be, in favor of "a revenue tariff with discrimination in favor of home industry,"—just what the Whig Party was advocating; only they pretended that the Whigs were in favor of protecting merely a few interests, and that they were in favor of protecting all interests alike. Brownson exposes the dishonesty and absurdity of such pretension. Protection, he shows, is directly or indirectly a bounty to the protected interest, and government has nothing to give in the shape of a bounty to one interest except what it takes from some other interest or interests. "And this miserable quackery is wise legislation, and supported by the most eminent statesmen both of the Whig and Democratic party, your Clays, Websters, Polks, Wrights, and Buchanans!" "*The only possible way of protecting all interests alike, is for the government to afford special protection to none.* The only wise course for an American statesman to recommend to his countrymen is that of free commercial intercourse with all nations. We wish we were, as a people, wise enough and honest enough to refuse to raise our revenue by duties on imports and to raise it only by a direct tax on property. Politicians may say what they please, may express all the horror they can contrive to affect at the proposition; but a direct tax on property is the only wise tax. When the revenue is raised directly, the government is sure to be kept pure by being kept poor. Every man knows how much he pays, and is sure to look closely after its expenditure.

But it is, at present, idle to contend for the system of direct taxation.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

LECTURES, ORATIONS, SERMONS.

BROWNSON'S originality and force were unquestionably due to his physical and moral temperament; but it is very questionable whether they would have been preserved if he had passed through the usual collegiate and university training.

Much has been said of self-made men, more especially of self-educated men, and much that is sheer nonsense. Brownson was counted an educated man; he knew passably the Greek and Roman classics, was not ignorant of the sciences, had mastered most of the systems of philosophy, knew the languages and literature of the principal modern nations of Europe, had studied more carefully than most scholars ancient and modern history, theology, and politics, without ever having been to college, or even to school, except a short period at the Academy of Ballston. His professors had been books, and his own observations and reflections. Every really educated man is a self-educated man. You cannot pour knowledge or wisdom into a man's mind as you pour liquor through a tunnel into a bottle. A man must take up learning by his own action, digest, and assimilate it to his own mind, or he will never be anything more than a learned fool.

* Brownson's Works, vol. xv, pp. 501-504.

Schools and colleges have their necessity, because few without them will get any learning at all; and they have their advantages in abridging the early labor of the scholar, in forming regular habits of study, and in giving to the mind a certain systematic discipline, which is of great importance. Yet, if the mind is not of more than ordinary strength, college habits and rules cramp it, serve chiefly to compress it, and hinder rather than promote its free and vigorous action and development. The strict discipline of the college or university would have filled up some gaps in Brownson's education, but would most likely have made him a routinist, and done him as much harm as good. Yet, seldom is there a self-educated man, to whatever distinction he may have attained, that is not painfully conscious as he grows old that he might have made himself much more than he has done, had he more diligently improved his time and better availed himself of the advantages within his reach. Perhaps all men, as they grow old, looking back on what they have accomplished in comparison with what they might have done, feel that they have let their life run to waste or frittered it away. No man who has really lived, thought, and acted ever looks back on his past life without being painfully conscious of short-comings, and no faith should be put in the happiness said to arise from the view of a well-spent life.

I believe regular education unfavorable to force and originality of mind: it may strengthen and assist the weak and make them more intelligent; but it deprives the strong of their power, tending to bring all to a level. Veneration for authorities, imitation of models, excessive attention to studies only valuable as a means, and not as

the end of education, tend to exalt the manner above the matter of a discourse in the estimate of the student, and make him attend more to the elegance of his diction, the brilliancy of his wit, and the rhythm of his sentences than to the strength of his reasoning, the good sense of his remarks, and the accuracy of his observation.

Many a writer whose language is generally pure, polished, and harmonious is rendered insipid by classical affectations, mythological allusions, and an air of pedantry. He may wield the scymitar of Saladin ; but is not able to strike with the sword of Cœur de Lion, or the club of Hercules.

Although Brownson considered it a great advantage that he was, as is said, self-educated, and never came under the ferula of the master, yet books did him almost as much injury and tyrannized almost as absolutely over his mind as professors could have done. The only difference was that the tyranny of the book was shorter, and the tyranny of one could be more easily exchanged for that of another. Yet it was an advantage, for after all the authority of the book could be more easily shaken off and the mind become more accustomed to think and act for itself, and what is most of all, to grapple by itself with the difficulties as they come up, without depending entirely on the professor to do all its serious thinking. He thus acquired a freedom and vigor of mind as well as a self-reliance that college could not have given, but might have prevented.

It is a difficult art to learn how to study a subject, and is acquired only by a few, and by them only with long practice. Genius is a gift, but it cannot dispense with mental culture, with study, or hard thinking. In

every thing, in the humblest weed the gardener pulls up and throws away, there is more than the profoundest philosopher sees, or can see, as well as a richer poesy than any poet yet has sung. This thought lies at the basis of Wordsworth's theory that there is poetry in the commonest things. Only his practice was faulty, which usually gave us the prose of common things, not their poetry, that is, if poetry is any thing more than measured prose. We hear people tell how they are struck with their own littleness and the power and majesty of God when they stand before the Falls of Niagara, or when they contemplate the vault of heaven, and consider the number of worlds or systems of worlds that roll in the illimitable regions of space, and to which our system is but a speck. Brownson was as much struck by a single spire of grass, and infinitely more when he tried to penetrate the mystery of a thought or an act of heroic sacrifice. It is not true that any man feels dwarfed before the grand and sublime works of the Creator, for no one ever thinks of bringing himself into comparison. The contemplation of the works of the Creator never depresses the soul, but tends to elevate and expand it with noble thoughts and lofty aspirations, just in proportion as we penetrate their meaning and seize their grandeur and magnificence. There is among us too much nature-worship, and not enough worship of God in nature. English and American poets abound in chants of nature, especially external nature, but rarely the ever-present God whose presence creates nature, gives it being, life, motion, significance. Hence their chants have in them nothing divine ; they are fanciful, shallow, meaningless. God is above nature, its creator, but he is also in nature,

and he who sees him not in nature is neither a poet nor a philosopher. Wordsworth had some such thought, but he lacked, not the poetic feeling, but the poetic sight, and really saw less than many whose pretensions were far from as great.

It was mainly by hard thinking that Brownson did his studying. Whatever he attempted to investigate, he was never satisfied with merely so much understanding of it as occurred to him on its first presentation, but continued to reflect and ponder on it till he had extracted the deepest meaning he could discover in it. This was the case, whether the matters were great and important or minute and insignificant. To the latter he gave interest and dignity by treating them in reference to general principles and more important subjects. Often he derived light from reading what others had written ; but more often he was indebted for it to hard thinking, to continued meditation. Spiritual writers tell us that many illiterate persons by earnest meditation on the mysteries of religion have attained to a higher and deeper knowledge of them than learned doctors. Just so with truth in the natural order ; it is ever present to the intellect, and we have but to clear away the clouds that obscure the mind's vision, and steadily contemplate it.

Yet although Brownson had never received a regular education in a college or university, he had studied oratory more earnestly and thoroughly than the vast majority of college graduates. He had read attentively all the most applauded orations of ancient and modern times, and had heard the best speakers of his own country, by no means behind others in oratory.

His taste and good sense inclined him to prefer the finished and exquisite design and elevation of a Grecian temple, in its severe simplicity ; penury of ornament ; neglect of beauties of detail, which are limited to the necessary and the useful ; its masses of plain surface with no superfluous parts, but grand, complete, graceful, elegant, and beautiful, because the whole is beautiful in its fitness and careful finishing ; to the monstrous and offensive deformity of a Dutch pleasure-house where every inch of the surface is brilliant with color and rough with curves and angles. Hence he preferred ideas to jingling words, propriety of language to copiousness ; and avoided misplaced vehemence of language, and overdone warmth of feeling, and intemperate luxuriance of declamation.

The earliest Greek poets and orators possessed an easy simplicity of thought and expression, sometimes indeed rude, but always free from the use of studied figures and labored ornaments, forced and unnatural sentiments, and jingling sentences. Scarce one of the classical writers of Rome, not even Cicero, was wholly guiltless of this showy and mean eloquence, so contrary to good sense and good taste, yet so studiously cultivated by almost all our speakers and writers. Aristotle even recommended the use of puns to orators, and the three great tragedians of Greece introduced them into their poems.

In his various addresses, orations, lectures, sermons, discourses, Brownson's style and manner were as varied as the subjects and the occasions that provoked them. In sermons and political addresses he was more impassioned, imaginative, declamatory ; in academical addresses

and lyceum lectures reasoning, argument, and exposition were more conspicuous, as a general rule ; though in every case he sought to convince the mind before laboring to rouse the feelings. Even the errors of the American people are imbibed in logical forms, and the road to their feelings lies directly through their understandings. His discourses, even in his most impassioned moments, were founded upon argument, which he enforced with warm feeling, but not till he had labored to convince his hearers' reason.

In his most oratorical outbursts, and most eloquent moments he was with all his fiery vehemence, the most self-contained and self-controlled. With a firm grasp of his subject and a clear consciousness of his purpose, he was never mastered by it, but ever remained its master.

The force or peculiarity of his style in writing or speaking consisted less in the construction of his sentences than in his choice of words ; and these were selected, not for their sound, but for their sense and expressiveness. His style was never wordy. He arrived by a short and simple path at his point, going by a straight line. He did not speak about and about a thing, but said it at once. His view of his subject was always original, often ingenious. Singularly distinct in the exposition of facts, clear and skilful in stating the terms of a question, his powers of reasoning were extraordinary, and he often overpowered his hearers with a resistless torrent that made the speaker and the language be forgotten in the subject. His fulness of matter, his large and original views, the ingenuity of his illustrations, the closeness of his reasoning, the vehemence with which he poured forth his whole feelings and thoughts, added

to his earnestness of tone and manner and the sincerity and candor of his character, free from all mean or paltry faults and love of display, never failed to enlist the sympathies and control the judgment of his audience, unless assembled with hostile purpose.

An instance of the latter sort occurred in an address in the Tabernacle in New York. The audience were unfriendly and his fearless condemnation of their opinions was followed by hisses and yells. Brownson seemed to grow taller, as well as fiercer, as he advanced to the edge of the platform on which he stood and shouted in a voice distinctly heard above the din of yells and hisses: "I came not here to gain your applause or to escape your censure ; but to tell you the truth; and I *will* tell it." Genuine Americans, they liked his spirit, and soon there was a universal burst of applause.

At another time, he told a New York audience that while they boasted of freedom of speech, they were the most intolerant of all men of what did not please them. Uproar, din, yells, hisses, followed; but Brownson calmly, yet loud enough to be heard all over the house, asked, "Did I not say truly? What better proof could you give of your intolerance of free speech?" Some laughed at this, the rest applauded, and the discourse was well listened to afterwards.

On one occasion, the present writer remembers very distinctly, he took for the text of his sermon Luke xiii, 21. The leaven he interpreted as the clergy; the meal as the people, and inquiring why the whole was not leavened, he argued that the fault was in the clergy; that instead of hiding in the meal, they glorified themselves like the pharisees of old, held aloof from the people, and

puffed up with the opinion of their own excellence, said in act and manner, if not in words, "Stand back! I am holier than ye." Illustrating the various instances in which the minister might unite with, comfort, advise, encourage, assist, his flock, he concluded each in the words, "The priest holds aloof, and says, stand back from me; I am holier than ye."

Perhaps at the present day the picture might not be a just one; but fifty-five years ago, a minister who did not bear in his manner, his speech, his look, as well as in the cut of his cloth, this feeling plainly expressed, would hardly have been regarded in Massachusetts as having the spirit of his calling.

The congregation so felt it, too, as was evident from their wrathful looks. And when the preacher gave out the hymn after the sermon, not a voice in the choir responded. Then in a tone of fury he cried to the choir: "Sing! I tell you." In a trembling voice the contralto, Hannah Hawkes, began the hymn alone; at the second line the others joined in, and the service proceeded.

The Fourth of July rarely passed without an oration from Brownson in some New England town, sometimes on the duties of American citizenship, and often on temperance. He was frequently called on also to address college societies on the occasion of their annual commencement.

In one of these orations, given at Brown University, Providence, R. I.,* he treated the question of American Literature. That we had not a literature that could compare with that of England, Germany, or France he assumed as granted, and his inquiry was, why our liter-

* Brownson's Works, vol. xix, p. 22.

ature had not attained to a larger and healthier growth, and by what means it might become more worthy of the country. It had sometimes been said that we were too young a people and had not lived long enough to create a literature. But, the speaker says, our fathers were not savages; they had Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, Bacon, and Milton; the Bible and the classics, which lie at the bottom of all modern literature. Others ascribed our literary deficiency to our democratic institutions; but Brownson saw nothing in them to hinder the expansion of the mind, to check the play of fancy and imagination, or to impede free thought and utterance.

A principal cause of the meagreness of our literature Brownson found in our long colonial dependence on England, followed, as it was, by undue deference for English models and English criticism, which prevents our attaining to freedom and originality. We shall never, he said, produce works of freshness and power, till we dare trust ourselves, till we come to feel that American human nature is as rich as English human nature; that the emotions and the forms of speech natural to an American are as proper in themselves and as conformable to the laws of universal human nature, as those natural to an Englishman; and that Boston or New York has as much right to decide authoritatively on matters of taste and composition as London.

The speaker believed the fact that the majority of our literary men fail to sympathize with and to trust the people was another cause of our want of literary success. The American people are democratic and demand a democratic literature for their national literature.

But the chief cause of our deficiency in literature, and the main reason why we had remained so long the literary vassals of England, the orator contended, was that we had been engaged in no great work, for the successful prosecution of which literature was necessary ; but the activity of our minds and the sentiments of our hearts had found thus far their utterance in clearing away the forest, planting the rose in the wilderness, and erecting cities and villages where lately prowled the beast of prey, or curled the smoke of the wigwam.

By a rapid survey of the epochs when literature most flourished, the orator shows that literature came not when it was bidden ; but when there were great questions at issue, grave problems up for solution, with which the minds and the hearts of the multitude were busy ; and the men who contributed to the literature were also busy with these questions, these problems ; felt a deep and thrilling interest in them, saw the work to be done, and came forth with what skill and energy they had to do it.

That there was a great question then to be answered, a great problem to be solved, the speaker felt assured. We had solved the question of political equality, but the problem of social equality was pressing for a solution, and in the struggle which had already commenced true American literature would be born.

Well-nigh sixty years have passed since that opinion was expressed. It was an honest belief, a patriotic hope. It is unbecoming in a citizen to despair of the republic, and if he foretells more than afterwards comes to pass, he is not therefore to be thought altogether a false prophet, but rather one who spoke more according to his

wishes than his foresight. We may not now excuse the low state of our literature by the newness of the nation, the necessary occupation of the whole people in the rude toil of securing subsistence in the first years of the national existence, and the consequent want of leisure, and claim that when we grow older, when education becomes more general, we shall have a literature as respectable in the face of that of other countries, as are our energy, industry, and other virtues. We have now all the marks and traits of an old people; we have as many men of leisure as can be found elsewhere; we have given what is called education to a very large proportion of the people; we have a larger proportion of our population engaged in liberal and professional pursuits than have most European countries; we have and for years have had the greatest questions and most difficult problems in political and social science to discuss and to solve. Yet scarcely an American of them all has discussed those problems from an American standpoint and in harmony with American political and social principles; but almost all have sought their solution in the doctrines of European liberals, or in antiquated notions suited only to other ages and circumstances, or else have limited their inquiry to what has been the interpretation of society and government in England. Our literature is very much like our education; what it has gained in expanse it has lost in depth. The great aim with writers who make a profession of literature is to be popular, and rather to please than to instruct or elevate their readers, who, as a rule, have no taste for any thing better than novels, magazines and newspapers. Not in Brownson's, but in quite another sense, has our literature become democratic.

Dr. Wayland, at that time president of Brown University, held doctrines very similar to Brownson's on many subjects, including some of the views in the essay on the laboring classes. Thus Miss Lynch wrote Brownson on September 20th, 1840, soon after the publication of that essay :

"I had forgotten to tell you that I am going to make some selections from a book I have of Dr. Wayland's discourses, quite Brownsonian. Foretelling the future contest between man and men he says: 'Then on the altars of our God let us each one devote himself to the cause of the human race, and in the name of the Lord of Hosts go forth unto the battle. *If need be, let our choicest blood flow freely*, for life itself is valueless when such interests are at stake, &c.' As bloody-minded a man as the editor of the Boston Quarterly !"

But Wayland had now become one of Brownson's most violent denouncers,* and in arranging the commencement exercises in 1840, he took opportunity to oppose him as is told in another letter from the same lady of September 5, that year, in which she says :

"We have had commencement the past week. We had an address from Mr. Kinnicutt of Worcester, the whole force of which was directed against the doctrine of the article on the Laboring Classes ; and several students pointed their small arms towards it. So, on the whole, perhaps it is well that you did not come, unless you could have had a chance to reply. Your views are opposed with so much vehemence that I begin to think they may not be impossible to realize, after all."

* See Mrs. Whitman's remarks, ante, p. 216.

July 26th, 1843, Brownson pronounced an oration before the Gamma Sigma Society of Dartmouth College, at the annual commencement. His subject was "The Scholar's Mission.* The oration was carefully prepared and delivered in the orator's best manner, as is evident from the fact that both Mr. Webster and Mr. Choate, who were present and made orations on the same occasion, in congratulating Brownson assured him that his was unquestionably the oration of the day. The following week, Brownson delivered the same oration at Burlington before the University of Vermont. An unpleasant association of the orator and the poet on this occasion seems to have been prevented by the President's firmness as told in a letter from him to Brownson the week before the commencement.

"UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT,

"BURLINGTON, July 24, '43.

"Dear sir,—A debate has been going on, in my mind, whether I ought or ought not to write you again, but on the whole have taken my pen. It is merely to say that the young gentlemen have appointed their 'committee of reception' both for the orator and *poet* as though it was their intention to place Mr. Eastman † by your side on the occasion of the anniversary; and it is understood by common fame that Mr. E. has signified his intention of coming *nolens volens*.

* The oration may be read in Brownson's Works, vol. xix, p. 65, et seq.

† C. G. Eastman entered the University of Vermont in 1833, but did not graduate, in consequence of some trouble with the faculty. He was suspended, and a friend of his expelled. He was a newspaper editor most of his life; issued a volume of poems in 1848; became a state senator; and was granted the honorary degree of A. M. in 1852.

"The house in which the commencement exercises are to be held is regarded as under the control of the faculty, and they will be unwilling to have it occupied by Mr. Eastman.

"I have thought proper to communicate the above, and to say, whatever may be your own determination, it would give us pleasure to see and to hear you.

"Very truly yours, etc.,

"J. WHEELER."

So far as Brownson was concerned, he had been too accustomed to newspaper abuse to harbor resentment, and had Mr. Eastman been retained as the poet, he would have gone all the same and delivered his oration.

Lectures, especially during the winter season, were the source of a great part of Brownson's income, and occupied much of his time, though the preparation of his lectures usually added nothing to his labors, as they were on the same subjects on which his mind was all the time occupied, and on which he was writing, so that speaking on them, whether in public addresses or in private conversation, was the best possible preparation for writing.

There was hardly a small town in New England, or large one in the Atlantic States, where Brownson had not lectured. In the larger cities, for several years, he gave courses of lectures on some subject which he divided into three or four parts, taking up one each evening. The arrangements for these lectures were prepared by zealous friends in the city where they were to

be delivered, prominent among whom for their exertions in this behalf were the Heckers in New York, and William D. Kelly in Philadelphia.

In the winter of 1842-3, the subject of these courses was the middle ages, in which Brownson, himself a Protestant minister, with no notion of being any thing else, condemned the ungenerous prejudices of Protestants against the Catholic Church. These prejudices which he had never shared, were due, he showed, either to not understanding that church or else to an unwillingness to do it justice. The hostile feelings manifested against it he maintained, were wholly out of character; for say what we will of it, it is the original Catholic Church, and to it we are indebted for nearly all the good Christianity has. Whatever of religion Protestants retain, is but a reminiscence of Catholicism. To it they are indebted for the preservation and revival of ancient literature, for the preservation of the holy scriptures, and the writings of the fathers, and for our religious language and works of devotion. Surely, they ought not to condemn it.

The Catholic Church he honorably mentioned for its democratic influence. Protestantism favors monarchy or aristocracy; Catholicism favors humanity. Absolute monarchy had no existence in modern Europe until the Protestant movement began; for it was not till then that kings and nobles could feel that there was no organized power on earth above them. The Catholic Church has always shown a tenderness to the poor, and through ages of barbarism and misrule, it was the protector of the humble laborer, the poor and friendless. Its services in this respect, during the long period in which mod-

ern society was in its process of elaboration, should by no means be forgotten.

The Catholic Church, in his opinion, had its errors, but the chief of its errors it held in common with Protestantism. The great error of the Catholic Church, he thought, was in the fact that it was founded on the denial of the reason, and the assertion of a positive authority. But Protestants do this in as great a degree as the Catholics, and in a manner altogether more offensive. The difference between the two was well expressed by Guizot: "The Catholic says, Believe but do not examine; the Protestant says, Examine, but believe as if you had not examined." The Protestant churches, in so far as they are churches, are as averse to the exercise of reason as the Catholic. With the Episcopalians, you must bow to the Lords Bishops; with the Presbyterians, to the Lords Presbyters; with the Congregationalists, to the Lords Brethren. Every Protestant church assumes, in point of fact, precisely the same authority over the mind and the conscience which is claimed by the Catholic Church. And Brownson freely owned that, if he must submit to authority in matters of belief and conscience, he should much prefer that of the Catholic Church to any other.

Protestantism, so far as it is Protestantism, is akin to infidelity, and the resemblance between Luther and Voltaire, in their respective missions, is very great. Voltaire was the complement of Luther. Luther denied the authority of the pope, and asserted that of the written word. Voltaire was as much offended by the assumed infallibility of a book as by the assumed infallibility of the pope, and therefore attacked the book, as Luther had

the pope. In its negative character, Protestantism could never satisfy the religious wants of mankind. In its positive character, it has no advantages over Catholicism. The lecturer said he inclined to the Quakers, who are neither Protestants nor Catholics. The Catholic asserts the infallibility of the church, represented by the pope; the Protestant asserts the infallibility of the written word, and makes faith dependent on history and criticism; the Quaker asserts the infallibility of the Spirit of God, a portion of which is given to every man, and whereof every man is his own interpreter. To this the Christian world, he claimed, must come at last, and then the church really universal, the true Catholic Church, would be constituted.

His conviction was, and for some time had been, he said, that the rejection of the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century by nearly one-half of Europe had been the cause of the present deplorable condition of the European operative. The rejection of the authority of the Catholic Church left men free to follow their own natural selfishness, and all social matters to be regulated according to the dictates not of christian charity, but of the self-interests of governments and individuals. Men left the gospel, charity, self-denial and the merit of good works, and sought to work out truth and righteousness and social well-being by leaving man to follow his own interest, and seeking to neutralize the excessive selfishness of one by pitting against it the equal selfishness of another. The result had been what we then saw, and our only remedy must be in returning to the system always enjoined and insisted on by the Catholic Church, or to some similar system. In regarding man merely as

a producer of wealth, and not as a moral, religious, and intellectual being, our political economists had left out the only really valuable part of their science. Perhaps, if they would study the state of society in the Catholic middle ages, imperfect as it certainly was, they might gather some useful truths, and perhaps they might also see that the distance we have travelled since is all the distance between the old monasteries and the modern work-house.

Not long after Brownson delivered this course of lectures on the middle ages, the Right Reverend John Hughes, Bishop of New York, took up the same subject, and in the January following lectured before societies in Baltimore and Philadelphia on the importance of a Christian basis for the science of political economy. His views were similar to Brownson's, and clearly, forcibly, and eloquently expressed, and gave Brownson equal surprise and pleasure. He had long ago decided that the Catholic Church had outlived its mission, and here was that church in the person of one of her most influential prelates proclaiming the doctrine he thought most needed at the present time, with the vigor of a living and thinking friend of the people. This not only gave him a favorable impression of the bishop ; but greatly increased his growing sympathy with that church.

CHAPTER XIX.

PHILOSOPHY.—COUSIN.—JOUFFROY.—ABNER KNEELAND.—
KANT.

DURING the years 1835, 1836, and 1837, Brownson contributed articles pretty regularly to the *Christian Examiner*, chiefly on matters relating to philosophy.

He had devoted great attention to the philosophical pretensions of the phrenologists, and made a thorough study of phrenology. He came to the conclusion that phrenology is a useful and interesting branch of physical science; but vigorously rejected its claims to supplant all metaphysical systems. The offer of an article, on phrenology was declined by the editor of *The Christian Examiner* for reasons given in his pleasant manner in the following letter:

“CHARLESTOWN, February 22, 1836.

“Dear sir,—I shall insert with pleasure your review of *M. Matter* in the next number of the *Examiner*. I shall also be glad to see your review of *Jouffroy*, as it will make us acquainted with the present state of French Ethical Philosophy. But as to the article on *Phrenology*, I altogether demur. I have rejected several proposals to take up the subject in the *Examiner*; partly because it has had its due proportion of space; partly because if we begin again there will be no stopping place this side of eternity; but most of all, because, in my judgment, it would interfere with the accomplishment of what has been the leading object of the *Examiner* from the beginning,—to wit, to encourage, support, build up, the Uni-

tarian body. The *whole* body needs the Examiner, and the Examiner needs the whole body, and hence it is, that for one, I do not feel at liberty to give its pages unnecessarily to discussions which give mortal offence, however conducted, to *many* of our own denomination. I hope your paper, when it is finished, will find its way to the public ; * but for the reasons hinted at above, and I have no time to go into the subject more fully, I do not think the Examiner to be its appropriate channel.

"Our next number will be tolerable, though the articles are too long. You will read with interest our friend Ripley's piece on Schleiermacher, and Stetson's on the state of the Temperance Reform.

"Very truly and affectionately,

"Your friend and servant,

"JAMES WALKER.

"Rev. O. A. BROWNSON, Chelsea, Mass."

Brownson's articles in the Christian Examiner which attracted the most attention were those on Cousin's philosophy, and did much to introduce it in this country.

France copied from the English the sensism of Locke and the deism of Lords Herbert of Cherbury and Shaftesbury. Of all civilized nations, England is probably the least philosophical, and has produced the fewest philosophers of a high order ; but the victories of Marlborough made every thing English the fashion in Paris, and France imported sensism and deism ; and this philosophy of materialism overthrew the Catholic Church and the feudal monarchy in that country. A sentimental

* Brownson afterwards wrote the article he contemplated on "The Pretensions of Phrenology," partly refuting and partly ridiculing them. It was published in the Boston Quarterly Review for April, 1839, and may be read in Brownson's Works, vol. ix p. 235, et seq.

reaction against this materialism seemed to set in with Bernardin de St. Pierre, Chateaubriand, Mde. de Stael; but the first scientific opposition to it was when Royer-Collard was appointed to the chair of philosophy in 1811. He was a disciple of a better school, the Scotch school of Reid and Stewart, and he attacked sensism unmercifully. In 1815, Victor Cousin, a disciple of Lamoriguière and Maine de Biran, and converted by Royer-Collard from sensism, was appointed assistant to the latter professor at the Sorbonne, and though only 24 years old, his ardent, penetrating, and eloquent genius soon operated a revolution in French philosophy and exerted vast influence on the entire philosophical world.

Cousin called his system "eclectism" as embracing the principles of all the great schools of philosophy, which he attempted to mould into one grand whole. The bane of his method was that he attained only to a jarring syncretism, instead of a dialectic synthesis. Brownson did not at that time perceive this sophism, but was carried away by the new discoveries of Cousin, and followed him almost blindly, even applying his eclectism to all other branches of rational science. Brownson's analysis of Cousin's philosophy shows that Cousin begins by observation of the facts of consciousness, which next he classifies. This classification is psychology, which he makes the foundation of philosophy, not the superstructure. Observation of the phenomena of consciousness finds in man the ideas of just and unjust, the beautiful and its opposite, the holy and the unholy, the true, the true in itself, which no effort can trace back to sensation. There must then be, according to Cousin, three elementary faculties of the soul; the sensibility, to which

belong all the phenomena derived from sensation; the reason, under which he arranges our ideas of the absolute, or absolute ideas; and the activity, to which belong those phenomena which we are conscious of ourselves producing. Activity and sensibility cannot act without reason, nor reason without them. The activity is personal; it is our self. To confound the reason with the activity, is to make the reason subjective, personal, and to deprive it of all validity out of the sphere of our own personality, thus placing philosophy on an inclined plane to a new scepticism. If the reason, Cousin says, have no authority beyond the sphere of personality the laws of our nature may force us to believe that we are, that there is an external world, and God; but such belief can rest on no scientific basis. This is the necessary result of the assertion of the subjectivity of the reason, an extravagance only to be avoided by distinguishing fundamentally between reason and activity. As we are conscious that the truths which reason reveals are not our truths, we must admit that the reason is independent of us, of our activity.

Reason, Cousin argues, being independent of us, becomes a legitimate authority for whatever it reveals. It reveals to us God, and the universe, on precisely the same authority as our own existence. Ontology thus becomes as legitimate as psychology, and the passage from the subjective to the objective is effected!

Further Cousin says, in every fact of our consciousness there is a conception of our own existence, but only in so far as we are active, are a cause, and the bounds of our causality are the bounds of our existence. But this cause, which we are, is met with resistance at

every step, and may not do what it will, and we receive impressions through the senses which we do not cause. That which resists, which causes the impression is given in every fact of consciousness, but as independent of us, exterior to us—external nature—and is affirmed to us on the same authority as our own existence, that of consciousness. Both therefore are equally certain. We resist these other causes as they resist us, and to a certain extent, limit them, as they limit us. They must then be in the consciousness as relative, as finite; contrasted with, or distinguished from the infinite, the absolute, without contrast with or distinction from which, they could not be conceived as finite or limited. In every fact of consciousness, therefore, there is conception of ourselves, and of external nature, both as finite, and also of the infinite. Hence one cannot help conceiving the absolute and infinite cause, and in every thought we affirm the existence of God, of nature, and of ourselves.

We call ourselves and nature substances for the simple reason that we are causes, and in our conception the limits of their causality are the limits of their substantiality, and a cause is substance only in that it is cause. Two absolutes are an absurdity; therefore, only one God. The relative, free, intentional personality, which we are, implies absolute, free, intentional causality, personality; and as the absolute can be found only in the absolute, it follows that God is a person, a free, intentional cause. The infinite is not inferred from the finite; for both are given simultaneously, and not only coexist, but coexist as cause and effect, and as such are the essential and inseparable elements of every intellection, the primitive data of the intellect, the starting-point of

all reasoning. As the conceptions of the infinite, the finite, and their relation are prior to reasoning, they do not proceed from reflection, which is the only intellectual act in which we have any agency; they must have their origin in a primitive, spontaneous belief, the result of the spontaneity of the reason.

Cousin's notion of objective reason, of what he calls the impersonal reason, was nowhere very clearly defined. If hard pushed he would probably have identified it with absolute ideas, that is with the absolute itself, which he identifies with God. He must have done this, because he distinguishes it from our personality, and from external nature, and only the absolute is left with which to identify it. It was therefore what Brownson in his later years called the intelligible, the ideal, affirming itself to the mind in ideal intuition, and which intelligible, or ideal, reflection shows to be God. In the article now under analysis, he takes reason in the sense of empirical intuition, which is the act of the mind, and contends that the authority of reason in the assertion of external nature and of God is adequate, and its testimony competent though at best only subjective. He insists that no further demonstration is required than the testimony of consciousness that our reason sees and knows the absolute and the universe, and we cannot go back of reason, nor is there any need of doing so. The credibility of reason cannot be proved, for we have only reason with which to prove the truth of reason.

The ideas of the infinite, the finite, and their relation as cause and effect, Cousin very justly contends, are the elements of all thought, of thought in itself, of God. God then is thought, reason and intelligence, in

itself. A thought or intelligence that does not manifest itself is a dead thought or intelligence, and as such is inconceivable. God must therefore necessarily manifest himself, and this manifestation is creation. Brownson at that time, accepted this teaching of Cousin, seemingly unaware that it is pure pantheism to assert creation as a necessary act, for the effect of a necessary act is itself necessary, and the necessary is God. A similar sophism vitiates the philosophy of all who attempt to pass from the subjective to the objective, or from the objective to the subjective, for if either can be logically deduced from the other it must be necessarily contained in it, and we fall into either pantheism or atheism under the form of egotism. Unless both the subjective and the objective are given simultaneously in one and the same intuition, they must remain forever apart.

Brownson follows Cousin in the pantheistic development of this doctrine, contending that creation from nothing, or from preëxisting matter would be an absurdity, and therefore God could only create out of himself, by developing, manifesting himself, and he is therefore the personality of the universe, though distinguished from it as a speaker from his words, the phenomenon from being. Hence they both identify the spontaneous reason with God, and find the origin of inspiration, prophecy, and revelation in the greater activity of the reason in some men than in others, a difference of degree not of kind. Applying this thought to Jesus, Brownson contends that as the phenomenal personality of Jesus was absorbed in God, so in proportion as we lose our phenomenal personality in our higher, absolute personality, we become one with God.

Finally, he defends Cousin's assertion of the partial truths which lie at the basis of sensism, idealism, scepticism, and mysticism, and contends with him that the only philosophy which is not defective, and therefore false, is that which includes all systems. He accordingly enlists in the ranks of the Eclectics.

Cousin published a third edition of his "Fragments Philosophiques" in July 1838, in which he seems to accept Brownson's as the correct exposition of his philosophy. He says: "En 1836 et 1837, M. Brownson* a publié une apologie de mes principes où brille un talent de pensée et de style qui, régulièrement développé, promet à l'Amérique un écrivain philosophique du premier ordre. Mais savez-vous ce qui accrédite la nouvelle philosophie française à New-York et à Boston? C'est avec son caractère moral et religieux, sa méthode, cette méthode psychologique qui fait presque sourire M. le président de l'Académie royale de Munich. Il y a plus; dès que cette méthode franchit certaines limites et s'élève à une certaine hauteur, les esprits les plus énergiques ont peine à la suivre† et reculent devant des conclusions dogmatiques, qui, en Allemagne, ne souffrent pas la moindre difficulté et sont admises comme d'elles-mêmes."

From the time of receiving the first of the articles above referred to, Cousin began sending his publications to Brownson, and Brownson his to Cousin. With the first of these packages, Cousin wrote the very interesting letter here inserted:

* "The Christian Examiner, September, 1836, Cousin's Philosophy; ibid. May, 1837, Recent Contributions to Philosophy."

† "Voyez dans le Boston Quarterly Review, 1838, No. 1, January, un article de M. Brownson: *Philosophy and Common Sense*, en réponse à un article du *Christian Examiner*, November, 1837, intitulé: *Locke and the Transcendentalists*." See Brownson's Works, vol. i, p. 1.

“ Mon cher monsieur,

“ Je m’empresse de vous remercier du bel article et de la lettre obligeante que je reçois par Monsieur Jules Renouard. Toutes les choses polies que j’y trouve pour moi, me touchent sans m’aveugler, et me sont une douce récompense de tout ce que j’ai souffert pour la philosophie. J’entrevois avec une satisfaction infinie qu’au-delà de l’Océan le Christianisme et la liberté ménagent à la philosophie un immense avenir.

“ De retour d’un voyage en Hollande, et accablé d’occupations, je ne pourrai cette fois m’entretenir à mon aise avec vous. Mais je ne veux pas différer de vous ôter toute crainte sur l’état de la vraie philosophie en France. Elle y est toujours vivement combattue, et il n’y a pas de mal à cela, mais jamais elle n’a pas compté plus de partisans sincères et éclairés. Vous semblez aussi ne pas connaître le dernier ouvrage que j’ai publié et où M. Henry et vous auriez pu trouver de quoi éclaircir et fortifier la seconde édition des *Fragmens*. Je vous envoie à tout hazard les œuvres posthumes de M. de Biran dont l’Introduction se lie à celle des *Fragmens* et à mes leçons. Permettez moi de vous recommander cet ouvrage et de vous prier de la méditer. La forme en est sévère, mais le fond en est très riche. Je désirerais vivement que M. Henry pût avoir cet écrit pour la nouvelle édition de ce qu’il a la bonté d’appeler ma *Psychologie*. Ayez je vous prie l’extrême obligeance de faire passer l’exemplaire joint au vôtre à M. Henry. Vous trouverez une petite note biographique sur mon compte qui pourrait aussi servir à M. Henry à rectifier quelques petites erreurs de son Introduction.

“ Nul doute, monsieur, que vous pouvez compter sur mes amis et moi pour la nouvelle Revue à laquelle vous songez. Dès que j'aurai entre les mains le premier numéro, je prierai un de mes jeunes amis de l'annoncer.

“ Travaillez, monsieur, avec courage et avec espérance à implanter la philosophie dans votre patrie. N'y laissez point pénétrer le scepticisme, quelque forme qu'il prenne, et ayez foi dans la Raison. C'est cette foi qui affirmera toutes vos croyances, votre christianisme comme votre patriotisme. Le scepticisme est l'ennemi éternel de la vraie sagesse, et ce n'est pas contre lui un sûr remède que le sentiment, quand le sentiment ne s'appuiera sur le fondement immortel de la raison.

“ Je connaissais M. Channing. Mais je vous demande des renseignemens sur les autres amis de la philosophie en Amérique. Quels sont vos professeurs les plus distingués, et les ouvrages dont ils se servent ? Parlez moi de MM. Henry et Linberg. Où est et que fait ce dernier ? Voulez-vous bien lui remettre cette petite biographie ?

“ Savez-vous, monsieur, que la préface de la seconde édition des *Fragmens* a soulevé en Allemagne une discussion qui dure encore ? M. Schelling s'est expliqué sur la nouvelle philosophie française dans un écrit très remarquable que je vous envoie et dont il existe déjà deux traductions françaises. Je vous envoie celle qui m'est le moins favorable.

“ Connaît-on en Amérique mes derniers travaux sur Aristote ? Je m'occupe en ce moment d'un grand ouvrage sur la philosophie du moyen âge.

“ Adieu, monsieur, répondez moi plus longuement que je ne le fais et faites mes compliments à ceux de vos compatriotes qui veulent bien s'intéresser à mes travaux.

“ V. COUSIN.

“ 10 janvier 1837.

“ Si Messieurs Everett sont encore à Boston voulez-vous bien me rappeler à leur souvenir ? ”

Another article by Brownson on the French eclectics appeared in the *Christian Examiner* for May, 1837, in defence of their method, and in exposition of Theodore Jouffroy's theory of morals. This article, entitled “Recent Contributions to Philosophy” is in substance as follows:

The rustic knows all that the philosopher does, but vaguely and obscurely, whereas the philosopher knows it clearly and distinctly. The one knows, the other comprehends. Each has consciousness, but only the philosopher reflects on the matters contained in consciousness.

Disclaiming responsibility for the doctrines of the eclectics, the writer, nevertheless, places a high value on their labors. French eclectism, he maintained, is not to be confounded with German transcendentalism. The latter is a very vague term, and may include systems inconsistent with one another. As used by the Germans it is nearly synonymous with metaphysics, and applies to the philosophy which starts from reason, and not from sensation, and maintains freedom and independence of the authority of those who have preceded. He objects to them that they build on hypothesis, and the theory elicits the facts, not as with the new French School, the facts the theory. He also distinguishes two classes of transcendentalists in this country. The first class, to

whom the name has since been restricted, disregarding experience, construct their philosophy by means of speculation alone. The other class adopt the psychological method, proceeding strictly by observation and induction, and in this respect resemble the French eclectics. Facts, taken singly, never satisfy us; we add them together, and take their sum, i. e. obtain by induction the laws or principles which rule them. The sensist school, before fully deciding what are our ideas, discussed their origin, which they attributed to the five senses. Cousin postpones the question of the origin of ideas till after he has ascertained what are our ideas, and analyzes the whole consciousness, whether its elements be the sensibility, the activity, or the reason, to use the terms of his division. This method he contends is scientific, and further that it only completes what Reid and Stewart began. After this defence of Cousin's method, Brownson proceeds to the examination of Jouffroy's books. Jouffroy a scholar under Cousin, and his successor, translated Reid and Dugald Stewart's works into French, and when Cousin became minister of public instruction, he placed Jouffroy in the council of the university. As professor of philosophy in the Faculté des lettres of Paris he delivered a course of lectures on natural law, in which he proposed to examine: 1, Whether there is a natural law obligatory on man: 2, man's duties to himself: 3, his duties towards things, or irrational creatures: 4, man's rights and duties in relation to society: and 5, his relations and duties towards God. The two volumes then published constituted the first part.

To ascertain whether there is or is not a natural law, any thing which man is under obligation to do or not to

do, Jouffroy proceeds to inquire of the consciousness whether there are any, and if so what are the moral facts of human nature. The facts he seeks for are those which regard the end for which man is made, the instinctive tendency by which he aspires to that end, the faculties given him by which to reach it, the freedom, or voluntary power by which he may govern his faculties, and the reason which furnishes him the motives of his conduct. The end of a being is determined by its nature, and is what is meant by its good. As soon as man exists, without any reflection on his part, certain movements take place within him which impel him instinctively to his good, his end; and simultaneously therewith, the faculties which God has given him so that he may attain to it, are set in motion. Finding obstacles and meeting resistance everywhere, they spontaneously concentrate their force in one direction. If the effort is successful, pleasure is the result: if not, pain. If man had been made capable of acting, but not of feeling, he would have had an end to aspire to, but no pleasure in success, nor pain in failure; hence pleasure is not the good, nor pain the evil, but signs of the attainment or the privation of some portion of our good. From these come affection and love, and aversion and hate, branching out into the various passions. The concentration of the faculties in consequence of the resistance met with by the instinctive tendencies is blind and subject to the passions, and among present passions, to the strongest. This is the state of childhood. When reason is awakened, it sees that all the tendencies and faculties aspire to the same end, the satisfaction of human nature, which reason conceives of under the general notion of good. Generalizing the

common property of things to produce good, reason rises to the conception of utility, and distinguishing pleasure from the good or utility which produces it, reason attains to the third conception, that of happiness. The reason, now comprehending the faculties and passions, sees that it would be better to secure the human force, the will, from the impulses of the passions, and concentrate it on the greatest good of human nature. A new principle springs up, *l'intérêt bien entendu*, an idea, not a passion, becomes our end, and self-control the means. Nature, passionate for utility, accepts this system of reason, deviates from it only with regret; passion therefore, supports the will in obeying reason. But the idea of reason does not suppress the instinctive tendencies, and man floats between the two states, now conforming himself to the counsels of interest, and now succumbing to those impulses. A new mode, however is introduced, the selfish. Our ultimate end is our own good. In following the impulses of the passions we are not selfish; in seeking our ultimate good we are controlled by selfishness, and have not yet risen to the idea of morality. If we ask selfishness, why are we bound to do any action, it may answer, because it will contribute to the satisfaction of our nature. Why contribute to that satisfaction? because it will yield us happiness. Why are we bound to seek happiness? No answer.—Reason now escapes from the exclusive consideration of what is individual, conceives that all possible creatures aspire to their special ends, which is their good, and all these different ends are elements of one ultimate end which embraces them all, that of creation, universal order, absolute

good, before which reason prostrates itself as to its sovereign, its motive, its rule, its law.

Such is the sublime discovery of Jouffroy, which he might have announced at the beginning as logically as at the end of the two volumes. He claims that it is based on the observation of the facts of consciousness; but,—stripped of all the vesture of language, not so eloquent as Cousin's, but more calm, and about as profound as the Scotch school which he admired above all others,—it shows as much theorizing and as little induction from facts, as any system of German transcendentalism. Not a step in it is inductively or deductively logical, and even the conclusion is lame and useless. He is no nearer the obligation he was in search of,—the basis of morals,—why we are bound to do or not to do one thing or another, when he arrived at the notion of universal order, then when he was at the stage of pleasure, or happiness, or interest, or selfishness. To the question, why are we bound to strive after universal order, even if it be the absolute good—which it is not,—or our own individual good? he can give no answer. There is but one basis of morality. When writing the article on Jouffroy, Brownson was unable to point it out.

A word may be inserted here concerning the controversy at this time with Rev. Abner Kneeland, a former Universalist preacher, and then a Free Enquirer, from whom in 1829 the Universalist association withdrew fellowship on account of his atheism. Brownson called it in the *Gospel Advocate* a "cruel and unfeeling persecution of this aged, and faithful, and talented defender of liberal sentiments, who believes as much as some of the rest of us. We are at a loss to understand excommuni-

cation among Universalists. We have no *hell* in which we can burn anathematized members." That his preaching would bring reproach upon Universalists, Brownson did not believe. "If a man preaches atheism," he said, "any fool may know he does not preach Universalism."*

In 1833, Kneeland was indicted at Boston for blasphemy, under the Massachusetts statute of 1783, which fixed the canon of Holy Scripture, and its amendments, and, as might have been expected, the first result was that, being excluded from his former place of meeting in Julien Hall by the proprietors, he took the Boston Theatre on Federal street, three times as large, and this was crowded. A few years after the various trials of *Commonwealth vs. Kneeland*, the defendant in that case being editor of the Boston Investigator, and Brownson editor of the Boston Reformer, and an advocate for the new French philosophy, a controversy arose between the two journals which was narrowed down to the simple question, whether all the phenomena of consciousness can be traced back to sensation. In order that those who read one side of the argument should have the opportunity of seeing the other side, it was proposed that both should appear in the same paper, and Kneeland insisting on his, Brownson yielded, and also consented to undertake "the laboring oar," and prove his negative. The controversy amounted to nothing as a controversy, as Kneeland's answer to all arguments was that the phenomena of consciousness were nothing without consciousness, and consciousness was a sensation; in proof of which he adduced Walker's definitions of *Sense*, one of which is consciousness; so that he made the question equivalent to this;

* Gospel Advocate, April 4, 1829.

can all the phenomena of sensation be traced back to sensation?

But the discussion is referred to here as showing Brownson's early view of the great question of the principle of causality, which lay at the root of his philosophical system all the rest of his life. The question involved in the controversy was important; for if whatever transcends the reach of the senses is forever barred from our knowledge, it is idle to talk of God, of religion, of duty, or immortality. The question related to the origin of ideas, and to prove that all ideas do not owe their origin to sensation. Brownson took as an instance the idea of cause. The sense, he contends, can give us no other idea of cause, than that of antecedence; they can give us only what they can themselves discern; and they do not perceive the secret connection between the antecedent and the consequent. The notion of antecedence and consequence which is all that we can infer from our sensations alone,—is very different from the notion of causality.

We have the notion of causality. We all think and speak of causes, causality, and causation, and even if what we think and say be foolish or false we think and say something. We then have the notion of the power of causing, creating, or producing effects, that is, of a creative or productive force. What is the origin of this notion? The senses take no cognizance of the power or force which causes, creates, or produces; they merely give us the phenomena or appearances of the external world, which fall under their observation, in certain relations in time, space, etc. We can very easily infer a particular cause in a particular case, because we have

already the general notion of causality in our mind ; but, destitute of this idea, how could we infer the presence of a causative force, from the simple phenomena of antecedence and consequence ? If the notion of causality be transmitted to the consciousness by sensation, then causality itself must be an object of sense, something which one or more of our senses can recognize. Then which ? Is it visible, tangible, audible, odorous, or savory ? Not at all. Then it is not recognizable by the senses, and no notion of it can be transmitted by sensation to the consciousness. But a notion of it is there.

How then do we take cognizance of causality ? Causality he conceived to be something which exists exterior to the percipient subject, an object of thought. We have, then, first, the subject myself, who have the conception ; second, the conception which I have, and third, the object, causality, of which I have the conception, and which must be exterior to the consciousness which has the conception of it. It must be real, or I could have no conception of it, and it is not perceived by the senses ; it only remains then, to say that it is the non-sensible, or the intelligible object of the perception, present to the mind, and yet distinct from it. This intelligible object Brownson calls the ideal, the idea.

Continuing the discussion of this subject in the Boston Quarterly Review for January, 1839, in an article on the eclectic philosophy, Brownson investigates again the origin of ideas. Before he became acquainted with Cousin's writings, like pretty much everybody in the United States, he had accepted Locke's philosophy without much question. The study of Cousin led him into the direction which he afterwards followed in philosophy.

Proceeding, as in natural science all do, by observation and induction, that is, by analysis and synthesis, he finds by the analysis of reason that we have certain conceptions, as they are called, or ideas, among which are those of cause, and of the infinite.

The senses can attain only to phenomena, and can give us no information of causes. The sensation may be the occasion of the inference of the idea of cause; but if the mind is not previously furnished with that idea, it could never dream of inferring it from data which neither contain it nor in any way indicate it. How draw out of sensible phenomena that which is not contained in them? from merely sensible phenomena infer a non-sensible idea?

Moreover, we not only have the idea of cause, and believe ourselves the cause of our own acts, and that certain bodies are cause of the motions we observe in certain other bodies; but we have also an idea of the principle of causality, that whatever phenomenon begins to exist must have a cause. It cannot come from sensation, even admitting sensation to be competent of itself to suggest the idea of cause; for sensation at best can suggest only the notion of individual cause, and only of the particular causes of which it has had experience. The universal principle cannot be obtained by induction from the notion of particular causes, for the universal is not contained in the particular, and a conclusion broader than the premises is invalid.

The notion of the infinite is another idea which cannot be derived from sensation. Sensible experience can give us nothing beyond its own objects, and these objects are all finite. Suppose, for the sake of argument, what is

not admitted, that the finite is given by sensible experience, we cannot conclude from that to the infinite, unless the infinite be in the finite. But the finite with the infinite in it, is not the finite, but the infinite. These ideas of the finite and of causality are not derived, then, from sensible experience. Not from the will, for to will them we must conceive them. There remains only the understanding, the reason, to finish them. They are intuitions of reason, furnished, in point of fact, though obscurely perceived, contemporaneously with the notion of the particular cause, and of the finite. This notion, that the sensation chronologically precedes the idea, is wholly at variance with the writer's later doctrine of ideas, after he had been taught by Kant that the ideal must precede the empirical to render experience possible. If it had been true that sensation precedes the idea, the consequence that Brownson deduces from that fact would have been as logical as it is certain, that there are no innate ideas.

Most men, if not all men, believe in God, that there is an external world. Is this belief well founded? The belief is a fact of consciousness ; but is it a chimera, a mere illusion, having nothing in the world of reality to respond to it? The discovery of a legitimate method of passing from the subjective to the objective has, from the birth of philosophy, been the great problem with every metaphysician. In the April number of his *Review* for 1839, Brownson seeks the solution of this problem. He distinguishes reason into objective and subjective reason. By the objective reason he understands the eternal reason, the immaterial world, the world of necessary truth : by subjective reason, our faculty of knowing, that by

virtue of which we are intelligent beings. It is certain that in its development our intelligence is subject to a power which we are not, and from which we cannot withdraw it. Though Reid and Kant had proved the element of necessity in all intellectual acts, and Fichte and Maine de Biran had shown that the characteristic of the personality, of the *me*, is liberty, and therefore nothing that can necessitate it can be inherent in it, they failed to draw the natural conclusion that if personality consist in liberty, and there yet be in every act of intelligence an element of necessity which governs it, that element must needs be outside of the personality, and objective. Then the intelligence contains an objective element; then the objective exists; then we can pass legitimately from the subjective to the objective; for the objective is shown by the intelligence in every cognition, and to repose on the same authority with that of any fact of intelligence whatever. The subjective reason is thus brought into contact with the objective, the Logos, into immediate relation with the Word that was with God, and was God, and which enlighteneth every man on coming into this world.

Soon after receiving the Boston Quarterly Review for 1838, Cousin wrote Brownson :

“ J’ai été bien malade, mon cher monsieur, et j’ai cru que vous ne recevriez plus de lettres de moi. Cependant en voici encore une qui vous apprendra que j’ai reçu il y peu de jours le Jonathan Edwards, le troisième et quatrième numéro de votre revue et quelques discours de M. Emerson avec un billet de vous sans date où se trouve une lettre de Madame Eliza Robbins. Malgré la galanterie française je repondrai une autre fois à cette

dame et écrirai à M. Ch. Brooks. Aujourd'hui je n'écrirai qu'à notre philosophe en Massachusetts.

“ Je commence par vous faire une querelle. Dans votre billet vous ne me dites pas si vous avez reçu de moi une lettre du 28 février 1838 avec quelques brochures, entre autres la *Métaphysique* d'Aristote ; si M. Ripley a reçu de M. Bossange une lettre du 10 avril avec le volume de ma *Leçon* de 1818, et une autre lettre du 5 avril avec la fin de ma *Leçon* de 1819, pour vous, pour M. Bancroft, pour M. Channing et pour lui. Je m'étais flatté que cette leçon par son caractère moral et politique ne déplairait pas trop à mes démocratiques amis de Boston. Veuillez dire à M. Ripley que d'ici à un ou deux mois je lui enverrai l'ensemble de ces leçons qui formera un volume, rédigé par un de mes amis, M. Vacherot. Je vous prierai de le lire avec attention, mon très cher ami, et de l'annoncer en quelques lignes, ainsi que la *Leçon* de 1818, rédigée par M. Garnier, dans les *Literary Notices* qui terminent votre Revue.

“ Mais voici un écrit qui peut-être obtiendra grâce à vos yeux, du moins en considération de l'énorme travail qu'il m'a coûté. C'est Abelard que j'envoie à M. Georges Bancroft en retour du Jonathan Edwards. L'introduction comble une lacune dans l'histoire de la philosophie scholastique. Cette grande philosophie ne commence guère chez les historiens, même dans Tenne-
man, qu'avec le 13^{me} siècle, et c'est là en effet son époque classique ; mais cette époque a dû être préparée, et c'est l'origine et les premiers développemens de la scholastique que j'ai cherché à débrouiller à l'aide de manuscrits inédits du 9^{me}, du 10^{me}, du 11^{me} et du 12^{me} siècles. Les notes de l'appendice sont autant de

petites découvertes dont vous sourirez peut-être, mais qui m'ont fait passer plus d'un jour et plus d'une nuit à mon bureau sur des bouquins indéchiffrables. Je ne sais si je m'abuse, je m'attache peut-être à cet ouvrage par la peine qu'il m'a donné, mais c'est celui de mes écrits que j'adresse avec le moins de crainte à ceux qui suivront après moi la même carrière. C'est depuis les Bénédictins le seul grand monument élevé à la Scholastique.

“Enfin je vous envoie à vous, mon cher monsieur . . . Quoi? Une troisième édition de mes *Fragmens*, avec un nouveau volume qui comprend des pièces inédites très précieuses de Descartes, de Mallebranche et de Leibnitz. Je n'ai pas osé faire une nouvelle *Préface in extenso* ; mais je l'ai condensée dans un avertissement où je réponds à la fois, à mes adversaires d'Allemagne et d'Ecosse, à ceux qui escamotent la psychologie et débutent par une ontologie arbitraire, et à ceux qui s'arrêtent à la psychologie. Cette préface établit nettement la position et le caractère de la nouvelle philosophie française au milieu des écoles contemporaines. Vous y verrez que je vous y annonce ; et je vous supplie de ne pas faire de moi un faux prophète. Maintenant, dites-moi s'il serait possible de traduire cette petite préface dans votre Revue ou dans le *Christian Examiner* qui devrait être satisfait de la fin. Franchement après avoir lu avec intelligence cette fin de l'avertissement, peut on encore m'accuser de Panthéisme?

“ Répondez, je vous prie, un peu déductivement à cette lettre, et condescendez à ma pédanterie épistolaire en me donnant votre avis sur chacun des articles dont je vous parle.

“ Adieu. Je pose la plume avec regret, car j’aime extrêmement à causer avec vous. Je vous suis et vous étudie dans votre Revue, comme j’étudie M. Henry dans la Revue de New-York. La vôtre est essentiellement démocratique; celle de M. Henry aurait plutôt, il me semble, un caractère conservateur. Vous êtes bien Unitairien, j’allais dire un peu Socinien; M. Henry, sans tomber dans les erreurs scientifiques d’un certain Calvinisme, est plus orthodoxe. Enfin, il me semble que votre Revue a plus d’éclat et de vie; tandis que l’autre a peut-être plus de circonspection et de gravité.

“ A merveille, mon ami, mais au milieu de vos poursuites politiques, n’oubliez pas la philosophie. Elle marche ici à grands pas, et chaque jour voit éclore quelque écrit nouveau. Je voudrais vivre encore quelques années pour achever mon Platon et assister au triomphe de la bonne cause. Adieu. Tout à vous,

“ V. COUSIN.

“ 15 décembre 1838.

“ P. S.—A propos j’allais oublier de vous dire que je ne sais ni ce que fait M. Laménais ni où il réside. Je le suppose à Paris et vous pourriez vous adresser pour lui écrire à son libraire, M. Renduel, à Paris.”

The metaphysical essays in the Review for 1844, were a series of articles on Kant’s *Pure Reason*, notable for their masterly analysis of Kant’s *Kritik*; and not less so for the advance on his previous metaphysical writings. For ten years he had followed Cousin and his school, and attempted to measure all truth by the standard of French eclecticism. Now he distinguished what he accepted and what he rejected of its doctrines and while he felt indebted

to its teachings and to those of the Saint-Simonians, Bazard, Enfantin, Leroux, and Lerminier, and the Abbé de la Mennais, a great share of which he had assimilated and made his own, he had gone far towards forming his own philosophy. In forming this he had found it necessary to go back to Plato and Aristotle and follow the course of philosophy down through the Alexandrian school, the fathers of the church, and the medieval scholastics. Unwilling to speak lightly of modern philosophy, or to say that no advance in philosophy had been made since the middle ages, he felt forced to affirm that, from Bacon and Descartes down to Cousin and Schelling, all the labors of philosophers had rather resulted in amassing materials for constructing a philosophy than in building the edifice. The common opinion that philosophy originated with Socrates, and was buried when the Greek schools were closed, only to be resuscitated with Bacon, Campanella, and Descartes, Brownson regarded as growing out of a false view either of the church or of philosophy itself, and instead of looking upon the last three centuries as philosophical centuries, he would characterize them as eminently unphilosophical, though scientific. The great questions debated by the Catholic theologians against the gentiles, the gnostics, the Manicheans, the Sabellians, the Monophysites, the Arians, the Donatists, the Pelagians, the Predestinarians, the Berengarians were all but so many profound ontological questions. The dispute between the Arians and Athanasians involved more than a mere dogma arbitrarily imposed by church authority. One little iota expressed all the difference between paganism and Christianity, atheism and theism. In asserting similarity, but not identity, of the

Father's substance and the Son's, the homoiousian introduced two substances as the basis of his theory of the universe, thus explaining life from the point of view of plurality, which is polytheism, or atheism. Pelagius's assertion of the power of the human soul to place itself in a salvable state, pressed to its last consequences, annihilates God, and proclaims the supremacy of man, by transferring the creative power to the creature and making the universe live by its own inherent life, independent of a supermundane creator. Gotteschalk, the precursor of Calvin, asserted the divine sovereignty in a sense inconsistent with human free-will ; and so far as free will in man is denied, man himself is denied, his active force, his substantiality ; and he becomes merely a mode or affection of the Creator, which is pantheism. The question raised by Berengarius involved the whole nature of genera and species.

For the last three or four centuries, philosophy, as usually taught and understood, has been profoundly infidel, claiming to rest for its authority on human reason alone, and asserting the absolute independence and sufficiency of reason. With most it has been since Descartes at least, the child of doubt, and has truly proved herself the legitimate daughter of her reputed father. Add to this, that the philosophical method pursued is the psychological, and as there can be nothing in the development not in the method, we can never pass beyond the logical generalization of the subject, and God, the Infinite, the absolute, considered in the light of this system, is but the veriest abstraction, with no substantial existence, no being at all, out of the mind itself ; or else it follows the ontological method, and developing all ex-

istence from the conception of being, can logically conclude no existence but the necessary effect of being, as necessary therefore as being itself, which is as pure pantheism as the former is atheism, and yet we wonder that these philosophers send out from their colleges Voltaires and Renans !

Mallebranche demonstrated that we can never arrive at knowledge, starting from Descartes's *I think* ; Berkeley and Hume did the same, starting from Locke's *I feel*. Then came Kant with the sad results of Locke's and Descartes's systems before his eyes, and enters into a criticism of both, in order to determine whether we have a right either to affirm or deny. With the exception of Leibnitz, Kant was probably the ablest writer on metaphysics that Germany has produced, and certainly has contributed very valuable materials to metaphysical science ; seldom understood, though clear enough in his thoughts and in their expression, he was very like Thales, who gazing at the stars fell into a ditch. The very problem itself which Kant undertakes to solve is an absurdity. The question whether the human mind is capable of science needs science to answer. Kant claimed to have demonstrated scientifically that science is impossible ; but if his demonstration was scientific, it established the fact of science in demonstrating to the contrary, thus assuming the possibility of science as the condition of proving its impossibility.

Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*,—a criticism of method rather than of science,—vitiating as it is, by the doctrine that the subject, not the object, determines the form of the thought, in accordance with which he makes the categories mere subjective forms, and ends where he

began,—has the merit of having proved the existence of *a priori*, or ideal, intuition, transcending all possible experience and which is the foundation of science; that the empirical is not possible without the ideal; that there is an ideal element in every fact of experience; and of showing that analysis adds nothing to the intuition, and that the necessary and contingent cannot be concluded, either from the other.

Among Brownson's papers are preserved his analysis of Kant's *Kritik* and a translation of much of it in his hand writing; showing how elaborate were his preparations for the discussion of the matter. Nearly all through the year 1844 the great subject of talk in the dining-room was Kant. Brownson's visitors, coming so far as from Boston to Mt. Bellingham in Chelsea, usually stayed to a meal and frequently remained at his house over night. The conversation in the "study" was probably, and that at meals was certainly, about Kant, till every member of the family seemed to know all about intuitions and the emptiness of conceptions without them, synthetic judgments *a priori* and their formation, and understood perfectly, what Kant seems not to have apprehended, that the *not-me* is not the *me*, nor the inneity of the *me*, as his disciple Fichte had the good fortune to discover.

CHAPTER XX.

CHARLES ELWOOD—REUBEN SMITH—CONVERSION OF INFIDELS—MIRACLES.

WHEN Brownson, after abandoning the Universalists and denouncing Christianity with Fanny Wright and company, resumed the office of a minister, and announced his sympathy with the Unitarians, he wrote in the *Philanthropist*, as has been already stated, that he intended to give to the public a full account of the process which from an unbeliever had led him to proclaim his faith in Christianity. After the lapse of eight years, he redeemed his promise by the publication of "Charles Elwood; or, the Infidel Converted,"* in 1840. The purposes the author had in view were the vindication of the reality of the religious principle in man's nature; the existence of an order of sentiments higher than the calculations of the understanding and the deductions of logic; the foundation of morals in the absolute idea of right, in opposition to the popular doctrine of expediency; the exposition of a spiritual, as distinguished from a material, philosophy; and the connection of Christianity with social progress.

The book was favorably received by the public, and the first edition of one thousand copies was quickly disposed of, though not before the author had become dissatisfied with his production, in consequence of which he would not have a second edition issued. A London pub-

* Brownson's Works, Vol. iv, p. 173.

lisher, however, continued an English edition as late, at least, as 1845. The book was most highly praised by the *Dial* (the transcendentalists' Review), the *Christian Examiner*, and other Unitarian journals. A tolerable notion of the plan of the book may be obtained from the *Dial*'s criticism, that "the discussion of the principles, which in their primitive abstraction are so repulsive to most minds, is carried on, through the medium of a slight fiction, with considerable dramatic effect. We become interested in the final opinions of the subjects of the tale, as we do in the catastrophe of a romance. A slender thread of narrative is made to sustain the most weighty arguments on the philosophy of religion; but the conduct both of the story and of the discussion is managed with so much skill, that they serve to relieve and forward each other." Dr. Wayland, of Brown University, however, very cleverly remarked, in an article in the *Christian Review*, that the book should have been called *Charles Elwood*; or, *Christianity Converted*; because Charles Elwood is the same before and after his conversion, and his conversion consisted in his conviction that he had been a believer all the while he thought himself an infidel. But the real design of the book was to show the radical identity between the true believer and the honest, intelligent unbeliever, and Brownson's own Christianity was when he was writing and when he published this work, what would be called merely a rational religious system.

In the beginning of the book Brownson introduces a Mr. Smith, a presbyterian minister in a very odious character, engaged in fanatical movements of a revival of religion. As Brownson first professed his religious

experience at the church in Ballston Spa, to which the Reverend Reuben Smith ministered, that gentleman, who was now preaching at Waterford, N. Y., was somewhat disturbed by the coincidence of the name, to which his attention was called by some friends, and borrowing a copy of Charles Elwood, read it carefully, and penned a letter to the author requesting an explanation.

“ WATERFORD, (N. Y.,) August 8th, 1841.

“ Rev. and dear sir,—It will be a sufficient explanation of the reasons for troubling you with this communication, that I have read Charles Elwood, and that my friends here and elsewhere have identified Mr. Smith, ‘a young clergyman’ introduced in the first chapter of the narrative, with myself, and supposed you might intend to be understood as giving facts in your own experience, as thus connected. My own opinion is however (after scanning this part of the book with unusual attention), that you do *not* mean here anything beyond a fictitious tale. If this was the case however, it was certainly very unfortunate to use a name, which in the circumstances you must know would be thus identified by some ; and if you do not mean to defend this part of your narrative as facts, then I should feel that I had a right to call on you for a disclaimer.

“ Of the book itself, or its sentiments, I at present say nothing, my sole object being in this communication to obtain an avowal from you in the premises of the above question. I cannot but think that your feelings as a gentleman and man of honour, not to say, that Christian courtesy, which is due between us and all per-

sons; will induce you to give a speedy and candid answer.

“ With respect &c.,

“ I am your friend and obedient servant,

“ REUBEN SMITH.

“ REV. O. A. BROWNSON, Boston, Mass.”

Brownson, in his answer to Mr. Smith, having expressed his regret that unintentionally and inadvertently he had caused pain and annoyance to one from whom he had never received aught but kindness and friendly services, assured his correspondent that the Smith of Charles Elwood was not intended for his portrait; but he had chosen the name Smith without sufficiently reflecting that those who knew the author's early circumstances would be likely to identify the imaginary character with his former pastor.

To this he received the following reply :

“ WATERFORD, (N. Y.,) August 22nd, '41.

“ Rev. and dear sir,—I may say, without affectation, or formality, that I received your letter with sincere pleasure. It relieved my mind from a painful and harrowing suspicion; and it gave me besides so much better hopes than I had dar'd before to indulge, both with respect to your own general state of mind, and its relations to myself—that I hardly know when I have read a letter with more emotion. I must not be misled, however, by the complimentary manner (however sincere) in which you are pleased to speak of myself: I will use the references of your letter only so far as facts are concerned—and say, what I honestly feel, concerning your present intellectual, or spiritual state. When a man has arrived

at the magnanimity to acknowledge he was once wrong: to look on his early confidence as the crudeness of *boyhood* and especially when he professes himself to be *verging* to the faith of his childhood (rare, rare are the cases when we are either wise or humble enough for this:) I conclude there is always hope of his coming *entirely* right, —(supposing him not now to be so) and this view, permit me to say, has confirmed, not only my affection in your case, but determined me to attempt something (if this be not presumptuous) towards promoting what I conceive to be still necessary to truth and happiness in your case.

“ *Orthodox, old-fashioned Presbyterian* as I still am, I firmly believe that more persons are *made heretics* than saved from error, by a premature and unnecessary severity of treatment; and I am resolved now (on what I had thought of before) to solicit your occasional correspondence, in reference to those great topics, in which we are equally concerned to be rightly informed and established.

“ I do not, however, propose *controversy*: wide as we probably are apart still on some points (take your views of Inspiration for instance.) I could never find that *pitted* arguments brought men together—and if I mistake not, you told me yourself, that your own first going over to Universalism, was in consequence of challenging a written controversy on the subject with one of a different opinion !

“ This was, however, in the days of your boyhood, or while you were as you express it ‘*an unlicked cub*,’ and as we, with both of whom the lapse of 20 years has made some difference—could possibly discuss this subject now with more candour, I have no objection to do so, pro-

vided you wish it, and believe it may lead to any good end.

“Tell me, in that case, how you can account for *Prophecy*, on your views of *supernaturalism*? and what *objection* you can have (believing as I understand you now to do, in the *personality of Deity*), to his *speaking to men* authoritatively and infallibly, according to the enlightened views of *Inspiration*?

“But, my dear Brownson, there is *one thing*, which—could I persuade you to—would be far more efficacious, I am confident, than any argument I could use,—or any other person,—to bring you to the comforts—and I must say—the correctness of your youthful faith. I almost *wept*, when I heard you say in Charles Elwood, that ‘*you wept when obliged, as you thought, to give up the faith of your childhood.*’ I said *then*, and I am confirmed in it now, ‘there is hope of that man.’ Now, sir, you had, if I understand you, *already seen* that it was *not* the *compulsory power of truth*, which made you an infidel; and my advice, or request is that you will meekly yield your mind (not blindly, but meekly and honestly), yield your mind still further to the same good influences which have brought you thus far. *Go back*, sir, *to the days of your childhood*. Avail yourself of the power of association here. Think *where* you were, and *how* you were, when the simple suns of childhood and youth shone on your path. Call up ‘from the vasty deep,’ your sleeping room in an apprentice’s office, your first place of prayer and praise—your baptismal hour; your relation of experience to a session, which I find recorded as ‘being very satisfactory,’ and above all, the solemn scene when you

entered into public covenant, and came to the sacramental table.

I cannot doubt you were happy then ; but how, my respected friend, has it been since ? By your own story, (and O, how glad should I be, would you give me more of it !)—by your own story, you must have been often very unhappy since ;—perhaps you still are—and that you must in future be, I feel perfectly assured, both by my observation of human nature and the word of God—continuing in your present state. You cannot, my dear sir, *resist a world*—and though you may have talents and many good points combined with what I must consider erroneous ones ; that world will not judge you as favorably as I do ; and you will wear your life out, without either happiness or reward. This emboldens me (as well as my views of a moral Providence) to say, *come back !* I do not ask you to come to *my faith*, much less to my *mode of expressing it*. But to the *Bible*—the good, old, unsophisticated Bible, according to its commonly received interpretation, and to a *fair, natural, and grammatical* construction of it. I do desire to see you fully returned, and I am far from being without hope that I shall yet see it. You will, I know, excuse the freedom with which I have spoken, and believe me to be, as I ever have been.

“Your friend and humble servant,

“ R. SMITH.”

But the author of Charles Elwood had more serious reason than the annoyance he had caused Reuben Smith to wish it had never been written, and would have recalled it if he could ; for it is a work which can do no one any good, and might do much harm. Its general

doctrines are false, and its tendencies mischievous. A harsh critic might say, moreover, that it is a crude and ill-digested work, for the most part exceedingly dull, and by no means pleasant reading :—that it is a mixture of autobiography, romance, and metaphysical disquisition and in such proportions that the one element spoils the other :—that it is too serious for a romance, contains too much fiction for an autobiography, and too much romance for a philosophic treatise :—that, as it is, it is “neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, nor yet good red herring,” but is a sort of literary monstrosity, which should be treated as Lycurgus ordered that the Spartans should treat their deformed children.

Only a Catholic, however, can condemn the work without reserve, and it is only justice to the author to say that on Protestant ground its general tendency and doctrine are not hard to defend. The book was written with honest intentions, and if it be but a lame apology for the Christian religion, it is the best it is permitted to a Protestant without departing from his Protestantism to make.

The work was for the most part written at Walpole in 1834, and at Canton in 1835, when the author was carried away by the speculations of Benjamin Constant and Victor Cousin ; and it was already below the author's views of religion in 1840, when it was published. In April 1842, he reviewed it in the *Boston Quarterly Review*, which he then edited, and refuted and rejected that portion of it borrowed from Constant and essentially modified the philosophical views taken from Cousin.*

* *Charles Elwood Reviewed*, Brownson's Works, vol. iv. p. 316.

In his "Synthetic Philosophy," published in 1843,* he rejected entirely its metaphysical theory, and attempted to establish the first principles of another and a sounder system. The book is in reality little else than an attempt to apply the method of the French eclectic school to the defence of religion and the exposition of Christian theology. The author had, even in his boyhood, been disturbed with doubts of the truth of revelation. At times he had succumbed to these doubts ; at times he had struggled against them. In one of his periods of struggle against them, feeling that his own reason was insufficient for his guidance, and concluding very justly that he should submit his private judgment to the authority of the church, when about nineteen years of age, he joined the Presbyterians. But he soon found that the Presbyterians could lay no valid claim to authority from God to teach, that they could in the last analysis appeal only to private judgment, and therefore had no authority to which he could submit his own reason. They told him expressly to take the Bible for his rule of faith, and to read and understand it for himself. He did so, and in a very few months the Bible seemed to him to teach, not Presbyterianism, but Universalism. He became a Universalist, and before he was twenty-two years of age he became a Universalist preacher. But the question of the inspiration of the Bible he had simply waived on joining the Presbyterians, in submission, as he supposed, to the authority of the church, and which would have been right, if what he took to be the church had really been the church. But when he discovered the Presbyterian sect was not the church, that it had no authority but that

* Ibid. vol. 1, p. 58.

of private reason, its authority no more sufficed for the inspiration than for the doctrines of the Bible. Very soon he found that the question of the inspiration of the Bible, which he had waived, and which for a moment he had silenced, had not been legitimately answered. It revived anew, and became more troublesome than ever. He found his old doubts returning with new force, and after some ineffectual efforts to silence them, he was thrown back into his former state of unbelief, and at the end of four years from the time he began to preach, he ceased to exercise the functions of a professed minister of the Gospel, and supposed that for the rest of his life he must contrive to live as well as he could without faith, without hope, and without God in the world.

A merciful God had otherwise determined. He could not rest in the state in which he found himself. He was not willing to be an unbeliever. His whole soul seemed to exclaim against infidelity, and the interior cravings of his nature seemed to demand a God in whom he could believe, whom he might adore, a Father he might love, a Sovereign he might obey, a Guide he might follow, a Saviour on whom he might rely. Life lost all its charm and all its significance. He could see nothing worth living for, worth making an effort for. He could understand no reason why he should prefer one thing to another, why he should do this rather than that. All became dark and meaningless, and he would surprise himself not unfrequently preferring a petition to God, in whom he persuaded himself he no longer believed, for light, for guidance, for relief. He attributed this to the effects of early education, to the impressions which had been made upon his childhood. But in fact he had scarce-

ly received any religious education at all in his early childhood. Moreover, these feelings, these cravings are common to all men, for religion is coeval and coextensive with the race. Education may perpetuate, but it cannot originate. There must have been a time when the religious education of children began. If there were no religion and no religious education of children before that time, how came parents and teachers to have a religion to teach, or to wish to teach it? Men must have had religion before they taught it to their children. Where did they get it? How came they to have it? If they had no such sentiments as Brownson experienced, they would never have sought it of themselves. If they had, then their feelings were natural, and religion is a want of our nature. Then religion is natural to man, and to fight against it is to fight against human nature itself. If they had not these sentiments, then of themselves they would never have come to any religion. But religion they have and always have had. Then it must have been given to them from some power independent of man, and as it is adapted to that which is highest and best in man, and tends, as it were, to elevate man, to exalt his nature, it must be given to man by a power above man. So take which view he would, Brownson found himself obliged to accept religion in some shape. It is natural to man, and then it is useless to war against it, for no man can change his nature; or it is given to man by a superior power, and then he is bound to submit to it as something above him.

Having arrived at this conclusion, that is, religion of some sort we have and must have, the next question which came up was, what religion shall we have? The best

religion, of course. The best religion is unquestionably the Christian. Then he would accept the Christian religion, as he then understood it. There was, at the time, no question in his mind as to what was the real character or dogma of Christianity. It was a matter of indifference, so far as doctrine was concerned, whether he should associate with Universalists or Unitarians, for in either connection he could hold the views of Christianity to which he had arrived. For external reasons he preferred the Unitarian body, and on resuming his functions as a preacher, which he did after having discontinued them for about a year, he became associated with the Unitarians, and continued associated with them till he became a Catholic.

It cannot be pretended that the conclusion to which he arrived brought him fairly within the Christian family. His formal reason for embracing Christianity was insufficient for a rational conviction. His reasoning was, some religion we must have, and we should unquestionably embrace the best religion; Christianity is unquestionably the best religion; therefore he would be a Christian. But there was an influence operating upon him which was not that of his own reasoning, and from that time his downward tendency ceased. If he was not a true believer, he at least wished to be, and constantly studied to be; and from the moment he came to the conclusion stated, he never had a single doubt cross his mind as to the existence of God, or the supernatural origin of the Christian religion. But, in reality, he was at an immense distance from true Christian faith.

Though he had ceased to doubt on the old questions, he was not long in discovering that he had obtained no

scientific solution of his former doubts. This did not any longer disturb him, for he felt confident, wherefore he knew not, that such solution was possible and could be obtained. He did not even wish it for himself, but he wished it for others. He thought by obtaining it he might do immense good by proclaiming it, and thus saving the world from infidelity. He presumed it must be found in philosophy, in metaphysics, and though he had no relish for metaphysical studies, and had been accustomed to sneer at them, he plunged headlong into them, resolved, if possible, to obtain a solution of the great problems which disturbed him. It was just about the time when Cousin's works were beginning to attract the attention of a few thinkers in this country. His friend Peirce urged him to study them, and became his guide in understanding them. Brownson had read very little on metaphysical subjects before; he had no knowledge of mental philosophy but what he had gathered from Locke, Reid, Stewart, and Brown, and some little reflection of his own. The whole subject was comparatively new to him. He was charmed with the eloquence of the French professor, and carried away by the apparent clearness and force of his ideas. He yielded to him as his master, and studied, after his custom as a boy, to comprehend him rather than to dispute him. He thought he found in him a solution of the difficulties which embarrassed him. In Cousin's system of philosophy it seemed to Brownson that he had obtained a method by which he could demonstrate the existence of God, establish the fact of revelation, and determine with sufficient accuracy the principles and doctrine revealed.

Having found this method, he lost no time in proceeding to apply it, which he did in Charles Elwood. But he had not yet obtained the solution of the great problem. So far as his demonstration of the existence of God is concerned, lame and unsatisfactory as that demonstration must be regarded, there can be found in his argument from the absolute ideas the germs of his *Refutation of Atheism** published thirty years afterwards. The great problem of the age, the reconciliation of reason and revelation, he only solves by the virtual denial of revelation, defining inspiration to be the spontaneous revelations of the universal reason, and bitterly denouncing all existing priesthoods as enemies of which he was sworn to rid the earth. Not yet had he obtained the solution of this problem, nor for many years to come.†

Charles Elwood argues, and, as against his imaginary antagonist, with success, that miracles are not susceptible of proof, and moreover even if they were, they would not prove the truth of revelation, or the fact that almighty God has ever really spoken to man.

As this subject is one of great and paramount importance, especially in this community where so much has been written and said against miracles, and where there are so many who persuade themselves that they may reject all that is miraculous in Christianity and still be Christians, the subject should be placed in its true light, and the validity and value of the argument from miracles be explained and defended.

* *Brownson's Works*, vol. ii, p. 1.

† His solution may be read in the third volume of his works, of which volume it forms a principal part. It may be found in a more concise form, in "Faith and Science; or How Revelation agrees with Reason, and assists it." by Henry F. Brownson, Detroit, 1895.

The objections to miracles are as well put in Charles Elwood * as they can be ; but it is obvious at a single glance that the writer objects to miracles not so much because he questions the fact of their having been performed, nor because he really holds them valueless as proofs, but because he has a favorite theory to maintain to which he would subordinate every thing else. In point of fact, when writing the work he really believed the miracles as historical facts, and did in his own mind rely not a little on them as evidences as well as illustrations of divine revelation. This fact neutralizes, of course, the objections urged so far as they derive any force from the personal testimony of the author. Strange as it might seem, it is true, and he more than once confessed it, that for a long period after his first coming to Boston, his published views were directed by policy rather than conviction. In reality, though at best his views were low, he took for himself much higher ground than he assumed in public. From the fact that he had been an unbeliever, he concluded that it was his mission to war against infidelity, and to recall men to faith in the Gospel. He imagined in the heat of his enthusiasm that almighty God had as it were specially appointed him to this important mission, and his study by day and by night was how he could most successfully fulfil it. In determining the question he took his own personal experience for his guide, and adopted as the principle of his method of operation to make as small a demand on the unbeliever as possible, to concede to him every thing it was possible to concede without conceding Christianity itself. He did not intend to concede anything really essen-

* *Brownson's Works*, vol. iv, p. 183.

tial to the Gospel, but he intended to concede every thing not absolutely essential. He sought to bring Christianity down as near to the level of the unbeliever as he could and have it remain Christianity, so that the least change possible should be demanded of the unbeliever; trusting that when once he had got him to embrace one of its essential principles, the operation of his own mind and heart would gradually lead him to accept the rest.

Adopting this principle, he did not ask, what was the Christian religion as he himself embraced it, or as it was desirable that all men should embrace it, but, how much may be eliminated from it as commonly received without striking at its essential principles. He himself was ready to believe much, and found no difficulty in receiving as true large portions of the Christian religion as commonly received, which he supposed could be advantageously waived in his discussions with unbelievers; nay, which might be rejected without rejecting essential Christianity. Consequently, so far as concerned his public communications he adopted the most meagre system of Christianity in his power, content to be himself misapprehended and abused by the Christian public, if by doing so, he could recall any portion of unbelievers within the pale of Christendom. So also, in seeking the proofs of Christianity, he yielded willingly those which were the most offensive to unbelievers, and sought others which he felt they would more readily accept, and which he thought, if not absolutely the best, would yet be sufficient. Unbelievers, he knew, had peculiarly strong objections to the proof from miracles, and he therefore waived them, for he felt he could do without them. He even went further. He felt that it was bad policy to insist on them

and that by insisting on them he hindered the conversions he wished to effect. He therefore opposed the attempt to make them serve as proofs and urged all the objections against them he could. He justified himself in this course by reference to the end he sought to realize, and by the full conviction that it was the surest and best method of gaining that end.

However, he soon found by experience that his policy was less wise than he had apprehended, and that in effect he was converting Christianity to infidelity, not infidels to Christianity. He found also that the closer the approximation of Christianity to unbelief, the less reason he had to offer the unbeliever for becoming a believer. Why should he change when in fact he already was nearly all the change would make him? What had the Christian to offer him superior to what he already had? One day, reflecting on the question, this view of the matter presented itself, and he saw at once his policy was wretched as policy. It appeared clear to him that if he would convert a man from his views to his own, he must show the two systems in their difference, not in their identity. If, for instance, you would persuade a Protestant to become a Catholic, you must not begin by presenting Catholicity only on that side on which it differs least from Protestantism, but on that on which it differs most. You must present the two in their contrast, not in their resemblance. For so far as they are shown to be alike, you take away all prudent motive to leave one for the other.

Brownson abandoned, then, his former policy, and resolved henceforth to present the highest views he obtained instead of the lowest, to present the Gospel in

strong contrast with infidelity and call the attention of the unbeliever to the meagreness, the nothingness of his unbelief. It was not over two years after he had changed his course and resolved to present Christianity in all the fulness and richness with which he was enabled to behold it, before he presented himself to the authorized teacher to be instructed in the Catholic faith, an event which might have come years before, if he had yielded to the grace of God prompting him to believe, instead of trying from motives of human policy, not for his own sake, but for the sake of others, to ascertain how little of Christianity one might continue to get along with. He now utterly condemned the policy on which he formerly proceeded, though his motive was not a selfish one, as the policy occasioned him much misrepresentation and abuse which, if he had spoken more in accordance with the fulness of his convictions, he would have escaped.

Charles Elwood was written throughout in accordance with the view here stated, and therefore is utterly worthless as the testimony of its author, the main aspect under which it was esteemed in the community. The truth is, though the author was heretical enough in all conscience, he was not when writing it so heretical as the book would lead one to believe. It was not written as his profession of faith at the time, but as a work which he thought would do good by leading the unbeliever to look upon Christianity with more favorable sentiments, and ultimately induce him to seek admission into the Christian family.

The objections to miracles made by Charles Elwood are reducible to three. 1. The miracles are not proved; 2. They cannot be proved to have been really miracles;

and 3, they are valueless as proofs of divine revelation. All actual or conceivable objections to the argument from miracles come under one or another of these three heads.

The miracles in question are those recorded in the New Testament, which are said to have been publicly performed, and to have been publicly appealed to by our blessed Saviour and his apostles in attestation of his divine mission. The first objection alleges that these miracles, or the facts alleged to be miracles, are not proved to have taken place. "You allege," says Charles, "miracles in proof of revelation, when in fact nothing about your revelation, or in it, is more in need of proof than your miracles themselves." This is no doubt true, for when the miracles are proved, all is proved. But the intention of Charles was to assert that what evidence there is of the facts called miracles is insufficient.

The reason why the evidence in the case is regarded as incomplete is, I apprehend, in the assumption that the miracles being extraordinary facts cannot be sufficiently evidenced unless by extraordinary proofs. The evidence we actually have in their favor, all who have examined it at all admit, is equal, to say the least, to that which we have in the case of the ordinary facts of history, which no one ever thinks of doubting. No one can deny that the actual amount of testimony we have that there was such a person as Jesus Christ, is much greater than that which we have that there was such a person as Julius Cæsar, and that the testimony in favor of any one of his miracles is equal to that which we have in favor of any one of Cæsar's battles. How happens it then that men may be found who believe the latter and not the former?

The answer is in the nature of the facts asserted. Cæsar and his acts, it is felt, lie in the order of nature and belong to the ordinary course of events ; while Jesus Christ and his acts lie out of the ordinary course of things, are extraordinary in their nature, and therefore demand extraordinary evidence to warrant us in believing them. But is this true ? Can any man assign any reason why the evidence which would warrant us in believing that Cæsar invaded Britan, should not warrant us in believing that our Lord fed five thousand persons with five loaves and two fishes ?

No man can say that miracles are not possible ; nay we all know they are possible ; for we know that God can work a miracle if he chooses, since he is omnipotent, and a miracle implies no contradiction. Before he works a miracle, we of course cannot say he will work one, nor can we say that he will not. We have not the least reason for presuming against a miracle, if indeed we have no ground to presume in favor of one. God can as easily raise the dead as create the living, and there is nothing more absurd in supposing he does raise a dead man to life than there is in supposing that he creates a living man. If it be alleged that he has on a particular occasion, for an end worthy of his character as known by the light of natural reason, actually done so, there is no reason *a priori* why we should not believe it. It becomes a simple question of fact, and is to be believed the same as any other question of fact, on sufficient testimony.

The miracles, furthermore, recorded in the New Testament, as simple facts to be proved, are by no means extraordinary facts, but wholly within the reach of our

ordinary faculties. Their cause, or the agency by which they are wrought, is not the point to which the witnesses are required to depose. Of that we can judge as well as the witnesses, and it is determined not by the testimony, but by reason operating on the facts testified to. These facts, as facts to be observed, do not lie out of the order of nature, require no extraordinary powers to recognize them, and therefore no extraordinary evidence to establish them. Take as an illustration, the feeding of the five thousand persons with five loaves and two fishes. The points in this extraordinary act which require to be proved are very few, very simple, very obvious. Who did the act? How many were fed? How many loaves and fishes were used? How much remained after the multitude had eaten all they wished? Here are all the interrogatories it is necessary to put to the witnesses. The first is a simple question of personal identity, the others are simple questions of numeration, and all are questions of a very ordinary kind, the true answer to which it is by no means difficult to ascertain. Suppose the fact to have actually taken place, why would it be more difficult to prove it than it is to prove Leonidas and three hundred Spartans defended the pass of Thermopylæ against the Persians, or that the city of Jerusalem was taken by the Romans under Titus, son of Vespasian? If miracles are possible, if we can presume nothing against their actually being wrought, and if what in regard to them requires to be proved is as easily and as certainly ascertainable, and as susceptible in its nature of proof, as the ordinary facts of history; it must be conceded that the proof which suffices to prove the ordinary facts of history is all that is needed for them, and we are

unreasonable when we demand more. It is not true then that reason demands extraordinary proof in the case of the miracles, and that we cannot prudently assent to them unless they are sustained by more than the ordinary degree of historical evidence.

Moreover, this extraordinary evidence is supposed to be necessary because it is also supposed that the faith we are required to elicit by its means is of an extraordinary character. Say there is as ample evidence of the genuineness of the Four Gospels as there is of Virgil's Poems or Cicero's Orations, it amounts to nothing, it is alleged, because the faith we are required to elicit in the latter case is only of the ordinary kind, and no great harm can result if we chance to be deceived ; but with the Gospels it is different. The faith we are required to have in what they record is of an extraordinary kind, is to be a faith without doubting, and to be made the basis of our whole theoretical and practical life. This faith, it is evident, must have a higher degree of certainty than we can possibly have in any remote historical facts, supported only by historical proofs.

If we were required on the historical evidence of miracles to believe the Scriptures to be written by divine inspiration, and to take whatever they allege as the word of God, no historical evidence would or could suffice. If again the faith we are to yield the miracles on the strength of the historical testimony were to be that firm undoubting faith which we must have in order to be true Christian believers, the testimony would unquestionably be insufficient ; and this is the difficulty on this point felt by many sincerely wishing to believe. They see clearly that they cannot get from the historical evidence in the case

any thing like that degree of certainty that the miracles were actually wrought, which they feel they must have in the Christian doctrine, in order to be true and firm believers. In this they are right. They must believe the Christian doctrine with a firmer faith than they do ordinary historical facts. This is the reason why Charles Elwood considers the evidence of the events called miracles not sufficient to authenticate them as actual facts.

But it is not required that this firm faith be elicited on the strength of the miracles. It is not required to believe them with any firmer faith than the ordinary events of authentic history. If the historical evidence of the miracles is such as to warrant, in the prudent exercise of reason, taking them as actual facts, it is all that is required. Reason, in such case, requires us to take them as true; and to act, in all ordinary action, on them as true is perfectly reasonable. That this is enough for faith, I do not pretend; but that it is enough to warrant prudent action, I do pretend, and this is all that in the case is needed. For the faith that is required to be elicited, the religious faith, that is to come by and by, and by another agency. That faith does not depend on the assent given to the miracles on the strength of the historical testimony. That would be asking too much. But because the historical testimony does not suffice for religious faith, we must not conclude that it does not suffice for simple intellectual belief, and the removal of the objections which reason could urge against believing. The Protestant takes his faith professedly on the authority of the Bible; the Bible on the authority of the miracles; and the miracles on the testimony of history; and therefore has for his faith

only the degree of certainty that testimony is capable of giving ; which, if sufficient for one or two points, is evidently insufficient as it regards the main body of Christian doctrine, and therefore inadequate for full religious faith. But this is a mistake. The faith, the absolute certainty of faith, does not rest on the miracles, nor depend, in the last analysis, on historical testimony. It comes from another source, and is the gift of God. It can come only through the supernatural elevation of the creditive subject by the infused habit of faith. The belief we seek to produce by means of the miracles is of a different order, and for the purpose of removing the intellectual obstacle there may be to the operations of divine grace. For such purpose all that is required of the historical testimony is the simple ordinary faith which we yield to historical facts in general.

I will not enter into any detail of the historical evidence ; but merely remark that the church, that is to say, the whole body of Christians, has by a uniform tradition from the first, asserted that the facts actually occurred : they were asserted by those who could not have been deceived, and by their lives and martyr-deaths prove they could not have wished to deceive ; the gentile enemies of the Christians conceded the facts ; and so did and so do still the Jews, as we learn from their own writings ; and in point of fact no ancient events have a tithe of the historical testimony in their favor which the miracles of the New Testament have in theirs. This, it seems to me, removes the second difficulty and allows us to assert that the events called miracles are both provable and proved.

But the great difficulty lies further back, and consists in the doubt whether the events called miracles can be really proved to have been miracles, and, if miracles, whether they really prove that God has made us a revelation. But a careful examination of the facts enumerated proves that, if they were real facts, they were miracles. They are evidently superhuman, and require superhuman power for their production, and as they are all obviously for a good and holy end, they can have been produced only by a good and holy power. The argument of Charles Elwood is founded on a false assumption. He makes Mr. Smith admit that man, independently of revelation, supernatural revelation, is in total ignorance of God. He had no right to put this admission into the mouth of his antagonist; for man by natural reason can know something of God. "His invisible things, even his eternal power and divinity, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." * This fact overthrows his whole argument, because it leaves to us the power by natural reason to know enough of God to be able to recognize his seal in the miracle.

Charles objects to miracles, that we must know as much of God in order to know that the miracle is a miracle and wrought by him, as the miracle itself can teach us of him; and therefore the miracle is superfluous. The antecedent is true: the consequent is illogical and false. The miracle can teach us no more of God, in himself considered, than we knew before, and it is not intended to. The miracle is not wrought as the revelation, but as a witness to the revelation. We must know as much of the character of God before we can recognize

* Romans, i, 20.

him in the miracle as the miracle can teach us; and yet the miracle may not be superfluous. For it may, though it in itself teaches us nothing new of God, accredit his messenger. A minister presents his credentials to a foreign court sealed with the seal of his government. This seal reveals to the foreign government nothing of the intentions of his government; but it authorizes the minister, and proves that he speaks by the authority of his own sovereign, and that whatever he says is to be considered as said by his sovereign himself. The fallacy of Charles was in assuming that the miracle was intended to be a revelation of God, that is, a revelation of his intention in respect of us. This it undoubtedly is not. If the miracle accredits the miracle-worker as a divine messenger; it accomplishes its purpose; for, by proving him to be from God, it authorizes us to assume that what he says is said by divine authority, that is, by God himself through him, and therefore that his doctrine is from God.

The doubts entertained in regard to miracles are seldom, if ever, the result of examination. Blanco White tells us in his *memoirs* that he doubted the existence of God when he was but eight years old. Had he then examined the evidence the Almighty furnishes us of his existence, and found it insufficient? Poor child! No. And so it was with the author of Charles Elwood, and so I presume it is with all. I venture therefore to conclude that it is rarely, if ever, doubts arise from having examined the evidences of religion and having found them insufficient.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DOCTRINE OF LIFE.—THE PRINCIPLE OF PROGRESS.

AT the time when Brownson found himself involved in the thickest darkness of infidelity, and seeking for light he pored through the writings of the French philosophers of the last century and the first part of this, he caught now and then a glimpse of some truth which like a lightning's flash illumed for a moment with its fitful glare the spot whereon he stood, and while making its dangers visible, afforded just enough knowledge of his surroundings to enable him to grope and stumble on a few steps at a time.

If Constant, Cousin, and Leroux failed to lead him into all truth, they at least put him on the right road to reach it. Whether it was because he had fallen deeper in unbelief than these, or because he detected in them premises from which he deduced consequences they had not drawn, there was a steady progress of his philosophical and religious life from his first study of their writings.

Dupuis's *Origine de tous les Cultes*, and Potter's *Histoire du Christianisme* helped to turn him against all priesthoods ; but Constant's doctrine that religion is a universal sentiment or instinct of human nature drew him towards religion of some sort. For the only divinity he recognized was that of humanity, or the God in man, of Leroux ; and a universal instinct of man's nature must be divine, true and to be obeyed. He therefore devoted himself to the amelioration of the condition of his fellow

men, especially by efforts to elevate the poorest and most down-trodden, and interpreted Christianity as democracy, the doctrine of human equality, and its precepts as commanding the love of men as brothers.

From Cousin he learnt that in every thought there must be the thinking subject and the object thought, and that these are really as well as logically distinct. Finally from Pierre Leroux he learnt to distinguish development from growth ; and that life is growth, not development. With these truths to start from he constructed his doctrine of life.

He rejects the modern doctrine expressed by the term development, which presupposes that man contains in himself, from the first moment, the germs of all that he can be, and that his whole life consists in simply developing and maturing these germs. The acorn contains the law, the *idea*, if he might so call it, of the oak, but not the oak itself. It will never become an oak unless it have the aid of light, heat, and moisture, and appropriate food ; all which, though susceptible of assimilation, are derived from sources foreign to the nature of oaks. So of man. He can grow, that is he can live, only by virtue of a medium foreign to his nature as a man, to his humanity.

According to the very law of life in a dependent being, and according to what is implied in the very conception of dependence, man can never live in and of himself alone. Life is always the joint product of subject and object, and partakes equally of the character of both. Man's natural life, then, results from his communion with that which he is not. He communicates with irrational nature through the medium of the body ; the direct ob-

ject of his communion is other men. They are his object, and he theirs ; but, if left to their natural life, they can impart to him only what the race at the epoch assumed is already living, and he nothing else to them. Confine man, then, to this natural life, and the race must come to a stand-still.

In the necessity of man's communion with purely material nature, Brownson finds a solid basis for the right of property ; and in communion with his fellow men, for the family and the state,—three institutions indispensable for man's natural life, but incapable of elevating him above what he is, and ineffective for the progress of the race. He drew from this the conclusion that man is not and cannot be in himself progressive, and that his progress depends on an objective element in his life higher than material nature or his fellow men, that is, on communion with God.

In a letter to Dr. Channing on the " Mediatorial Life of Jesus," published June 1st, 1842, Brownson brought out this doctrine, and argues from it to prove:

1. Man naturally does not and cannot commune directly with God, and therefore can come into fellowship with him only through a Mediator.

2. This Mediator must be at once and indissolubly, in the plain literal sense of the terms, very God of very God, and very man of very man ; and so being very God of very God, and very man of very man, he can literally and truly mediate between God and man.

3. Jesus saves man, redeems him from sin, and enables him to have fellowship, as John says, with the Father, by giving his life literally, not only for him, but to him.

4. Men have eternal life, that is, live a true normal life, only in so far as they live the identical life of Jesus. "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son hath not life; except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man ye have no life in you." *

Soon after receiving a copy of this pamphlet, Channing wrote:

"PROVIDENCE, June 10, 1842.

"My dear friend and brother,—I have read your letter over carefully twice, and have derived from it much pleasure and edification. Your view, so far as I understand it, seems to me very striking and satisfactory. The idea that in Jesus an absolutely divine life is exhibited in connection with human nature, and that from him the blood of atonement flows into the human soul, is the central principle of Christianity. I have long received this idea, although I have never seen it stated philosophically as you have sought to state it. I am much interested in the philosophy of your letter, although I am afraid that from lack of acquaintance with the works of Leroux, I do not sufficiently apprehend the significance of what you say upon the 'subjective and objective.' Yet I apprehend enough meaning to induce me to thank you sincerely for the pleasure and profit your remarks upon this point have afforded.

"The subject is so vast that a single pamphlet is inadequate even to give a full idea of its importance and applications. If you write more upon it, I hope you will state your idea of the mode by which the individual soul wins communion with the divine life in Jesus; for some

* Brownson's Works, Vol. iv, p. 157.

passages of your letter would lead an incautious reader to think you a thorough-going Universalist and as asserting the actual appropriation of the life of Christ to the whole human race, past and present, will they or nill they.

“ Let me congratulate you upon the peace and confidence with which you assert your present views. You have found new light ; and I am disposed to look upon your changes, not as fluctuations, but as steps of rational progress, and to wish you joy in your consummation. May a younger and a smaller man than yourself venture to hope that your own plans of action will bear the impress of your present principles, that instead of putting your trust in the power of any mere ideas however good or novel, you will be true to your doctrine of life, covet something of the calmness of him whom you own as Saviour, and endeavour to gather around you a band of *living* disciples who will bless you for having shown them the way of life. Let us see you at the head of a really earnest and vital society of your own. God made you for something more than to scatter random shot, although those shot may sometimes be grand ideas and may hit old errors between wind and water.

“ As one who already owes you much, who reads you always with interest and meets you with pleasure,

“ I remain, with sincere esteem, your friend,

“ WM. E. CHANNING.”

The criticism is very just that Brownson “ appropriated the life of Christ to the whole human race,” for he had not yet emancipated himself entirely from Leroux’s notion of humanity ; and although he expressly main-

tained that Christ's life was transmitted through baptism, baptism he looked upon as a mere symbol, and his view was that Christ communing with the apostles, became their object, and so entered into their life and then was communicated to the world through them and those that succeeded them, from generation to generation, down to us.

While studying his way out of this difficulty, from another point of view light was shed on the problem ; and two roads, as it were, converging at the same point, he followed their course with all the more confidence.

To make this clearer, a brief summary of much that has been already told, may not be out of place.

Some twenty years before the period which we have now come to, Brownson's attention had been called to the wide discrepancy there is everywhere between the actual state of society and what everybody feels and believes it should be. He was struck by the wide disparity of social conditions, the general degradation of the laboring classes, and the immense superiority, in our industrial arrangements, of capital over labor. He saw that the whole tendency of modern society, under the industrial point of view, was to separate more and more capital and labor, and to depreciate more and more the price of labor ; thus creating a numerous operative class, whom capital could coerce into laboring for a mere minimum of human subsistence. From that moment he set himself at work to master the causes of the evil, and to find out and apply the remedy. The first essays of a young man not much advanced beyond his legal majority to solve so great a problem could hardly be any thing but failures. The only merit he could claim was that of

having at so early an age conceived the problem, and at a time, too, when there was little or no discussion of the subject in the country.

The problem once clearly and distinctly proposed to his own mind, he set himself with characteristic zeal and enthusiasm to the work of its solution. His first solution was sought in the principle of selfishness. We must effect, he said, such combinations as will make it for every man's interest to labor for the good of every other man. The causes of social evils are in our viciously organized society. Rewards are not proportionate to works. We pay a premium on iniquity. The priest lives by our sins, the lawyer by our quarrels, the doctor by our diseases ; the interest of the priest is that we sin, for if we did not sin he would lose his employment ; the interest of the lawyer is that we quarrel, for if we did not quarrel he would get no fees ; the interest of the doctor is that we be sick, for if we always had good health he would starve. We may go through society, and the same principle holds good. It is for the interest of the trader to cheat, that is, to buy an article under its value and to sell it for more than its value ; of the employer to oppress the laborer by paying him as low wages as possible, and of the laborer to cheat the employer by getting the highest price possible for the least amount of labor. Thus society, as at present organized, makes the interest of one everywhere repugnant to that of another ; and consequently makes it the interest of one man as far as possible to overreach and supplant every other man.

If the *causes* of existing evils are in the fact that society is so organized as to make it the interest of every

man to overreach and supplant every other man, then, obviously, the *remedy* is in harmonizing interests, so that each in pursuing his own interest shall contribute to the interest of all. How shall we organize society so as to produce this harmony of interests? This was the problem. Its solution, no doubt, was difficult, but its main difficulty was extrinsic, in the fact that men's minds were then turned away from its direct consideration; they did not grapple with it; the benevolent feeling and mental energy, which if employed on this question, would soon attain to a satisfactory solution, were employed about other matters, seeking to solve the problem of salvation in the world to come, and to make one's calling and election sure. Why was this? he asked; and his answer came. It is all the work of the priests. The priests have an interest in our sins, and therefore an interest in preventing us from solving the social problem; in employing us about imaginary worlds and beings; in keeping us gazing at the heavens, so that we should not take it into our heads to improve the earth on which we tread. Then, down with the priests! and as a church is nothing without priests, down with the church! and as belief in, and worship of the celestial beings keeps our attention off the earth, then, down with all belief in God, all religious worship! We must drop from the heavens to which we have risen in balloons swelled by the vain breath of priests, and take our stand on the solid earth, and devote all our time and attention, our thoughts and energies to the improvement of our earthy condition. When this is done, when the mind now wasted on superstitious dreams, fables, and fancies is once directed to the social problem, it will be solved, and we shall be

able to make the earth the abode of science, plenty, peace, and felicity.

All this seemed plausible, was logical, and in harmony with the dominant tendency of thought and speculation throughout the whole Christian world for more than a hundred years. What wonder, then, that it captivated the young socialist, feeling in his own heart every wound inflicted on the hearts of his brethren ! He found the priests and the church in his path, and he sought to clear them away. He wished to engross attention with the social problem. Well, the priests and the church, in his own mind, cleared away, he set himself to the work of solving the problem, and solved it, not as Owen did by communism, but as Fourier did, though without knowing aught of him, and in fact before his solution was much known anywhere, by *Association* and *Attractive Labor*. He could not claim to have drawn out a complete system of association, nor to have established all the conditions of attractive labor ; he had not arranged all the details ; but he had seized the principles of the practical part of what was called Fourierism, and that before 1829.

But having obtained his solution, he experienced a difficulty, a very serious difficulty ; that was, to get it into practical operation. He found that he must have some power to induce men to adopt it. He was sure it would work well, would itself generate all the power necessary to keep it in motion, when once put in motion. But how to get it started, how to get the machine agoing, —this was the problem. A short experiment sufficed to convince him that he needed to set it in motion the power which he could obtain only as the result of its operation.

It, when once agoing, would harmonize interests ; but, alas ! men governed solely by interest have not the sense to set it agoing. Selfishness was not adequate to its introduction. Then, selfishness, after all, would not serve as his grand lever of reform. Here he was sacrificing his health, his reputation, his prospects, to work out a reform for society. Was he selfish? Not at all. But the reform could not come unless many men would do as he was doing. Then, reform cannot come without benevolence, disinterestedness, sacrifice, that is to say, without the active presence of a non-selfish element. With selfishness, then, he would not be able to cure selfishness. Well, after all, if the machine is fairly agoing, will selfishness secure its successful operation? Of what is society now the resultant? Of absolute selfishness? No. It is the resultant of benevolence, love, combined with a preponderating selfishness. Abstract the portion due to benevolence, and leave selfishness to work alone, shall we improve the matter? Of course not, then the power of sacrifice will be needed not only to introduce the reform, but also to secure its successful operation.

Here, then, his whole theory went by the board. His beautiful castle in the air dissolved and left "not a wrack behind." He could not proceed a step without the power of sacrifice, which he called love. He must give up attempting to reform the world by harmonizing interests, by introducing arrangements to make the selfishness of the individual the principle of social good. His appeal must be to love, to the disinterested affections, to the power of sacrifice. There he found himself alongside of the philanthropic Channing.

But, how to produce the love? This question involved a new study, by which he was brought back, in a manner, to religious faith. He soon perceived that Christianity placed the excellency of one's character in love, charity, fraternity, and that its first and peculiar demand is that we love one another as Christ has loved us. Now he will succeed, Christianity is the lever. With this in his hand he will move the moral world. This was another step in advance. He had got out of the cold and heartless philosophy of the eighteenth century; he had approached another order of sentiments; and, cheered and animated, he went forth and preached the gospel of love, of disinterestedness, of fraternity. His soul was filled, and his heart glowed with zeal and hope, and many were the burning words he let fall, and not altogether in vain. But, alas! the difficulty was not yet removed. *If* ye love one another.—Ah! that *if*. Men did not love one another, and the simple declaration of the fact that the gospel requires them to love one another as Christ hath loved them, did not make them love. A new motive power was needed. He could do very well, if he could get the love; but how to get men to love, how to make them sell and give to the poor, how to bring home to the sinner steeped in the corruptions of the world, the cold-hearted, base, wretch growing rich on the unrequited toil, the tears and blood of his brother and his sister, the authority which he should not dare resist, which should make him docile as the child, and say, "Lord, here I am, do with me what thou pleasest,"—that, that was the difficulty. He could stand up and say, Love your neighbor as yourself, but what cared his audience? He was but a man addressing them; they disputed his interpretation

or his application of the text, and laughed or got angry at his most serious exhortations. What could he do? Those men cared not for him, that cared not for man, nor for God, and had grown too wise to believe in a devil. He might talk till doomsday, and oppression will run riot, man would continue to be the plague and tormentor of his kind. No, he had not got hold of the lever yet. It was not enough to preach the Christian virtues; there must be somewhere the power to call them forth. It is idle to talk of a law to be obeyed, if there be not somewhere the *authority* to look after the obedience.

A great fallacy has carried men, in our days, away into vague declamations, and vain sermonizing. In all modern sects it seems to be taken for granted, that all Jesus was needed for was to remove the obstacles there were in the way of our salvation on the side of God, and to teach us what we ought to be and to do in order to be saved. There is a singular forgetfulness of the real difficulty. Brownson came, with Channing, to the conclusion that the Christian life is the life of disinterested affection, and that whosoever has the spirit of Christ is a Christian; and then assumed this Christian life as the means of effecting the social reform he contemplated. Wherein was he wrong? Is not he who lives the life of Christ a Christian? And is not the Christian life the life of disinterested affection? And will not this life effect all needed reforms? Unquestionably. Nothing can be truer than all this. But the Christian life is the end, and our social reforms are needed for no other purpose than to enable us to live the life of Christ. When we have got the life of Christ, when Christ really lives in us, we have all good, and no evil can reach us. To assume then,

the Christian life as the condition of the social reforms, is to assume the end as the means. But how do you get the end? How do you get man to live the Christian life? Here is the old difficulty unremoved. The real problem is: How to produce the Christian life?

Should he solve this problem, as some of his clerical brethren did, by telling those who do not live it to come to Christ? To come to God, must mean, if it means any thing, to come into moral harmony with him, that is, into obedience to the divine law. He who is in moral harmony with God, who obeys the law of God, is no longer a sinner; he lives the life of Christ, the life of disinterested love, for God is love. Then we are to love as the condition of love; to live the life of Christ as the means of being enabled to live it. This is liberal Christianity, peculiarly adapted to the wants of the age, and to save us from the terrible ravages of infidelity!

Now, nothing will answer the purpose that does not reach the sinner where he is, and as he is, all polluted with sin; and that is not to him, all sinner as he is, the power of God, and the wisdom of God unto salvation. He must have some prepared body, some ministry or agency to bring the power and the wisdom to him. They tell us Christ is this agency, and so he is, when reference is had to the efficient, instead of the instrumental, cause; but, then, the sinner and Christ must be brought into a relation before the efficacy of his spirit can operate directly on the sinner. There must needs be a middle term that connects the two extremes, that brings the unholy within the sphere of the operation of the holy. This is the church, the medium of bringing us to Christ, and through him to God, that is, to live a godly life.

The agency of the church in producing in individuals the disinterestedness and moral power, and directing it in these individuals to the production of those social reforms which will finally bring all individuals into harmony with the Creator, can, then, in no wise, be dispensed with. Brownson found, therefore, in his experience, that the social problem with which he started twenty years before, cannot be practically solved without love, disinterestedness, sacrifice; that these are unmeaning words without Christianity or the Church of Christ.

CHAPTER XXII.

RELIGIOUS PROGRESS.

THE two lines of investigation Brownson was following were now united. His doctrine of life necessarily was modified in accordance with the reasoning, of which an abstract was furnished in the preceding chapter. Channing's objection, that it followed from his premises that the life of Christ was appropriated to all the individuals of the race, was now obviated by the doctrine that it must be applied to each individual through the agency or ministry of the Christian Church, through which alone we are enabled to live the life of Christ, and in which alone is found the lever that can elevate man and society, the principle and the power needed for individual or social reform.

Two questions now arose. 1, What is the Church? and 2, Where is the Church? In a series of essays in *The Christian World*, a religious journal conducted by Brownson, John A. Andrew, and one or two others, Brownson demonstrates that the Church is the Body of which Christ is the *Spirit*, the Life, the depository of the faith; and if it be so, it is absurd to pretend to find Jesus where it is not, directly or indirectly, actively present. This may or may not be an extreme view, as was claimed by many who accused him of having vibrated from ultra protestantism to the other extreme of the arc of oscillation; but it is the view which the apostles and the church have given us; and cavil as we may, set up as many standards as we will for ourselves, it is the only view that can be taken without denying Christ himself, and becoming without God in the world. It is not for a weak and erring mortal, whose judgments of truth vary with his tastes and feelings, almost with the tone of his digestion, to set himself up against Christ himself, and declare himself wiser than the church of the living God, which he has purchased with his blood. Brownson was not uneasy at the charge of taking an extreme view, for he had never been able to persuade himself that the much boasted middle way between truth and error, the church and no church, God and man, life and death, is either the pleasantest or the safest road. The attempt to get something between these two extremes which can satisfy the soul has never been successful, and the communion that seeks to found itself on the middle ground will never be more than a skeleton decked out in festive robes and ornamented with cap and plume; throw aside the robes, and there is nothing but the grinning and ghastly emblem

of death. No. Give us God, or give us man; give us life, or leave us to death. Do not mock us with vain hopes and deceitful promises. We want no medium between Catholicism and absolute infidelity.

Yet Brownson, while averse to a middle ground in matters of faith and doctrine, was very reluctant to follow the extreme course in practice. His first decision, and the motives on which it depended are so plainly stated in the following conversation written at that time that it may not inappropriately be here inserted.

Q. When you speak of the holy Catholic Church, do tell us which church you mean?

B. Not quite so fast, my good friends. Your question assumes that there are several churches; but I have proved that there is and can be but one. It is absurd to ask *which* that is.

Q. Then tell us which of the numerous religious *sects*, calling themselves churches, you mean by the holy Catholic Church?

B. The holy Catholic Church is not a sect. Sects are divisions: they rend, as the soldiers who crucified Him, the seamless garment of our Lord, and are satanic in their origin. Sectarism is a great and grievous sin. No sectary, or sectarian, is or can be of the church of Christ. They are suffering under the delusion of the wicked one who are seeking the holy Catholic Apostolic Church in a sect, whether called Roman, Grecian, German, Gallican, Anglican, American, Methodist, Quaker, Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregationalist, Unitarian, Episcopalian, or Swedenborgian.

Q. But, if it be not found in any one of these taken separately, may not all of them taken together in the aggregate be the holy Catholic Apostolic Church?

B. Do they all descend from the Apostles, and all intercommunicate, that is, make up but one communion? The Church of Christ is one body, with many members; but these members are all members of this one body, and *members one of another*. We must keep in mind always the mutual solidarity of the church. It is, moreover, an outward, visible body, as well as an inward and invisible; and it is made a living body by the one life of Christ, or the Holy Ghost, dwelling in it and sustaining to it the relation which our souls sustain to our bodies. All the members of Christ's body must, then, intercommunicate, for it is only in this way that they can be members of his body, and derive life from him who is its life, spirit, soul. I ask, then, again, do all these different sects, as you call them, commune with the true church, and intercommunicate among themselves? If I am a member of the church of Christ, I am a member of the church universal, a member of his church wherever, or in whatever country, it may be. If these several communions aggregated were the church universal, then, by becoming a member of any one of them, I should become a member of them all. But, does the fact that I am a member of the Presbyterian church constitute me a member of the Methodist church, the Protestant Episcopal church, the Lutheran church? Not by any means. If I should go into the Episcopal church they would reordain me, thereby denying that the Congregational communion is an integral part of the church Catholic. There is, we all know, no intercommunication between

these several communions, and therefore, even admitting that all could trace their descent from apostolical foundations, they would not constitute the church Catholic, when taken in the aggregate any more than when taken severally. The unity of the church is that of assimilation, not that of aggregation, and when the assimilation is wanting the unity cannot be predicated. There may, in a subordinate sense, be particular churches ; but they must be branches communicating with the root through the trunk, or else they must be looked upon as dissevered from Christ as branches cut from the vine.

Q. But, if the church Catholic is none of these sects taken singly, nor all of them taken together, pray, where is it? Has the church failed, disappeared?

B. It cannot have failed, unless we choose to give the lie to its founder. "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." "Lo, I am with you all days to the end of the world." Either we must reject Christ altogether, or admit that the church still exists as in the days of the apostles. We can no more separate Christianity and the church than we can Christianity and Christ. We must be either Catholics or infidels. There is no alternative. Catholicism or infidelity, this is the question.

Q. But, you evade the question. You do not tell us where is the Church Catholic.

B. I have given you its characteristics, and have, in so doing, pointed it out to all who have eyes to see and hearts to understand. I could not be more explicit, if I would.

Q. We understand you. You mean the Roman Catholic Church, of course. So, then, you fling yourself into the arms of mother church at last.

B. And what better can the weary and wayworn child, dying of hunger and thirst, than go back to his mother whose heart is yearning for his return? Was the prodigal upbraided for returning to his father's house? But, then, you are a little too fast. I know no *Roman* Catholic any more than I do an *Anglican* Catholic, or a *protestant* Catholic. The Catholic Church is not Roman, Grecian, or American. It knows no limits of time or space. It is superior to all local divisions, or distinctions, one, universal, and eternal.

Q. Still, you evade the point. Do define your position, so that one may, if possible, know where to find you.

B. That were idle. It matters not to the public whether my position is known or not. Yet, I am willing to define it. Strictly speaking, I have no position in this world. Thus far, I have been like Noah's dove sent forth from the ark, I have found no place whereon to rest the sole of my foot, and weary with my flight over the endless waste of waters, or the wild, weltering chaos left by the deluge of protestantism and unbelief, I have, if you will, come back, and am waiting, fluttering, to be received again into the ark. So far, however, as I have any ecclesiastical position at all, it is with that branch of the congregational communion called Unitarian. From my Unitarian-congregational pulpit, I proclaim, as best I may, the faith and discipline of the holy Catholic Apostolic Church, out of which there is no salvation.

Q. But, is not this an anomalous position, since by your own confession, that communion was not and is not the communion of the holy Catholic Church ?

B. Unquestionably, and, moreover, I should be inexcusable in retaining it if I looked upon it as final, not merely as provisional, and hereafter to give way to one in strict harmony and fellowship with the church.

Q. Explain yourself.

B. Willingly. There is no position in the protestant world for which I could exchange my present one. There is no protestant communion with which union would be union with the holy Catholic Church in any sense in which I am not now united with it. I may as well remain in the Unitarian communion as go into any other protestant communion, and better too ; for I can be more Catholic in this communion than I could be in any other protestant communion. I will not say but what I find the *doctrines* of the Episcopal church more in harmony with the Catholic Church than I do the doctrines of the Unitarian Church ; but these doctrines I can just as well maintain in the Unitarian as the Episcopalian ; and, as for communion, that church is no more in communion with the Catholic Church than is the Unitarian, and I regard my congregational ordination as valid as I should any that I could receive from the successors of Cranmer. When the Episcopal communion disavows its protestantism and is in communion with the holy Catholic Church, for it's nonsense to pretend that it is itself the Catholic Church, we may then believe we should gain somewhat by leaving our present communion for its. What I say here of the Episcopal communion I should say by a still stronger reason of all other protestant communions. I

have no fellowship with Methodistical cant, Presbyterian bigotry and sourness, nor with Anabaptist individualism.

Q What, then, so you propose to found a new church, a church of your own?

B. No. I have not the arrogance, or presumption to dream of such thing, nor can I be guilty of so great a sin as that of thinking to establish a new sect. I am no sectarian. Besides, for the philosophic who want a new church there is the New Jerusalem Church; and for the illiterate, enthusiastic there is the Mormon Church, either as good as I could found, if I should undertake it, and either of which will compare advantageously with any protestant communion to which the reformation has given birth.

No, the question I have to answer in my own case is the question that every minister in a protestant communion who has come to understand and believe the holy Catholic Church, has to answer in his case. The question, in fact, concerns the whole protestant world, and I have no right to adopt for myself a career which I am not prepared to urge upon all protestants.

Q. It seems to me, that career is very plain; go at once, and join the papists, and urge all protestants to do the same.

B. That is a plain, straight-forward course, no doubt; but for that I am not prepared. In any question of the Catholic Church, it would be worse than idle to think of excluding the church in communion with the see of Rome; but it is a terrible thing to assume the responsibility of unchurching, so far as one's declaration can unchurch, some sixty or seventy millions of protestants. I shrink from taking myself a step that necessarily makes

me say, that all Christianity is confined to the church in communion with the see of Rome.

Nor is this all. The church in communion with the see of Rome, though in my view the main trunk, and from which we should not be separated, has yet some matters of discipline and of faith, that require reëxamination and revision by authority, to adapt it to the new circumstances which have arisen. These are all matters which are by the theory of that church itself open to revision. Before I unite with that church I wish the Holy Father to become literally and exclusively the spiritual head of the church, and that he no longer add to his functions as spiritual head of the church that of an Italian prince. I wish also, while no encroachment should be made on his authority as the supreme executive and judicial officer of the church, the supreme legislative authority of the councils should be more clearly and distinctly asserted ; and lastly, that the mode or manner of calling councils, as well as their constituent elements should be pointed out and settled. In addition to this, that the church reassert her spiritual supremacy, and no longer, as in France and, if I mistake not, in some other countries, consent to be the stipendiary of the civil government. These reforms, and perhaps some few others, would not keep me out of that church if it concerned only myself. But every man who has been ordained a preacher in a protestant communion, if he joins that church, declares that all protestants ought to do the same. Now, I do not believe protestants ought to unite with that church till these reforms are effected.

Q. Well, what then do you propose ?

B. For myself, as an individual, I shall exercise my ministerial functions where I am, relying for my justification on the assurance of Christ, that those who are not against him are for him. But my plan is very simple. I cannot question but the protestant communions were all in their origin schismatic, and the authors of the schism must answer for it to Him who is the judge of quick and dead. Nevertheless, I do not believe it true to say that nothing of Christ is to be found in the protestant world. The schism was great, but not complete; it does not cut off all communion both direct and indirect. There has remained, so to speak, a *quasi* communion which is evinced in the unity of what we call Christian civilization, both protestant and Catholic. The branches were torn from the vine, but they were not, when so torn off, dead branches. They brought away a certain portion of life, which has not as yet all died out. Moreover, this life has been, to some extent, preserved by the Bible, the holy fathers, by a common literature, and similarity of institutions, all running back and having their root in the church before the schism.

The sin of the original schism belongs to its authors. We who live now are not and cannot be partakers of the guilt of it, though we may suffer from its effects, unless we seek to perpetuate it, or refuse to labor to effect a reunion. The practical question for us now is: How shall this reunion be effected and the direct religious communion which was broken off by the protestant schism, to the great detriment, if not to the total extinction of life, be restored. This is the great question, and they who neglect it and are forming protestant leagues for the extinction of what they choose to call popery, are

but widening the breach, and bringing down the wrath of God upon their heads for the terrible sins of heresy and schism. They reproduce the sin, and incur the guilt of the original schismatics.

Now, I propose that we all cease denunciation all around, that is, denunciation of all except what the church universal has unequivocally declared to be sin, and that each one of us, in our own communions, from our respective stand-points, reaffirm the Catholic church, its faith and discipline as the essential and indispensable media of salvation, as the church itself held prior to the great schism of the West. Let me do this from my Unitarian-Congregational-Independent pulpit; let the Presbyterian do it from his pulpit, the Methodist from his, the Episcopalian from his. Let it be reaffirmed at Oxford, at Berlin, at New York, at Boston, and soon it will be seen that there is a real unity springing up at all those remote points, and that a ground of unity has at length been found. Then let there be, for then it would be practicable, a new council of the church called, or a congress of delegates from all the different communions empowered to adjust the basis of reunion. This could easily be done, and then the various fragments would be brought together, and all who would not submit, would be treated justly as heretics and schismatics, as refusing to hear the voice of the church. They would be few and powerless, and would soon be absorbed. The church, then, no longer obliged to struggle for its very existence, could resume its work of social amelioration and the moral, intellectual, and physical elevation of the poorer and more numerous classes, interrupted by the obstacles it has had since to overcome.

This is no idle dream. There are great numbers in all protestant communities looking to this grand consummation, the Catholic Church, so-called, will favor it, and it will and must come. Then the old will become new, and the new old, and it will be as the second coming of the Lord. O, thou great Head of the church, hasten the day.

Brownson's theological views were now rapidly assuming more and more of Christian truth, the result of his doctrine of life on one hand and his need of the church for individual and social reform on the other. He writes in *The Christian World*. "The doctrine of mediation, when distinguished from that of the Holy Spirit, is redemption as distinguished from salvation. God the Son is the redeemer: God the Holy Ghost is the sanctifier. But there are in all this really not two agents, nor two works, for God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost are not three Gods, but one God existing in an ineffable unity in trinity; and the work of redemption is effected by imparting, communicating to the sinner the new Life which is the Holy Ghost." "God the Father sustains no relation to us but as God the Son. Jesus is God with us, and it is only through him that we can reach the Father or the Father us. For the Father coming into, or sustaining a relation with humanity, individually or collectively, is God the Son. Hence says Jesus: 'No man cometh to the Father but by me.'" To the very innocent objection of James Freeman Clarke that Jesus also says, "No man can come unto me except the Father that hath sent me draw him," whence it follows that if Jesus must bring us to the Father, the Father in turn must bring us to Jesus;

or, that the Father out of Jesus must come into immediate relation with us and draw us to Jesus, Brownson shows that it is in and through Jesus that the Father draws the sinner, and effects his reconciliation ; and in like manner that the influence of God upon the soul as the Holy Ghost is not direct and immediate, but in and through Jesus. "If God and the human soul may stand in mutually direct, immediate relation, is not all necessity for the mediator abandoned?"

No other view of the church could then satisfy him except that which makes it the church of God. To say that it is composed of pious persons associated for religious purposes, is to say that it is *made* by these persons, and therefore human, and not divine. To say that it is an æsthetic institution, producing an æsthetic effect, is to say it is no more authoritative than a song or a novel of the great Goethe, not to regard it as our spiritual mother, the spouse of the Lamb, the pillar and ground of truth.

"There are," he says in the same article, "on this matter of the church only two views that can be taken by those who believe in its divinity. One is the Quaker view, and the other the Catholic view. The Quaker makes the church internal and invisible, the Catholic calls by the name of the church, not this internal and invisible church consisting in the dominion of truth, righteousness, and love ; but the outward, visibly organized body, by means of which this invisible church which it calls the Kingdom of God and the invisible priesthood is effected. The Quaker church is the end ; the Catholic church the means of attaining it. My mistakes concerning the church formerly arose from not making a distinction between the church as a mediator, and the end

to be effected. I saw clearly the end, and stated, if we had that we wanted nothing else. In this I was right. But it so happened, the world had not attained the end, the mediatorial work was by no means completed. Means are still wanted. This I saw, and then I looked around to find what provision of means God had made for us, and I found that these means were all embodied in the Church Catholic. In adopting Catholicism I therefore gave up nothing I had previously received. With the Quaker view of the church as the end, and the Catholic view which embraces it and is the mediator of it, we have all we want. But with Quakerism alone, we are as the mathematician seeking to obtain a product with a single factor."

"Our ecclesiastical, theological, and philosophical studies have brought us to the full conviction that either the church in communion with the see of Rome is the one holy Catholic Apostolic Church or the one holy Catholic Apostolic Church does not exist. We have tried every possible way to escape this conclusion, but escape it we cannot. We must accept it, or go back to the no church doctrine. . . . We are thoroughly convinced in mind, heart, and soul that Christ did institute a visible church; that he founded it upon a rock, that the gates of hell have not prevailed, and cannot prevail against it; and that it is the duty of us all to submit to it, as the representative of the son of God on Earth." *

There was no ground on which protestantism, as a separation in doctrine or communion from the Holy See, could be defended without rejecting all notions of the church as an organic body; and therefore we are com-

* Brownson's Works, vol. iv, p. 559.

pelled, says Brownson,* "to look upon the separation of the reformers from the Roman communion, in the sixteenth century, as irregular, unnecessary, and, we must add, a serious calamity to christendom. We deny not that there was a necessity for a thorough reform of manners; but we cannot but think and believe that, if the reformers had confined themselves to such reforms and to such modes of effecting them as were authorized or permitted by the canons of the church, they would have much more successfully corrected the real abuses of which they complained, and done infinitely more service to the cause of religion and social progress."

At about this time, Brownson returning from a round of lecturing, related that while in Washington he was one day discussing with Calhoun and Buchanan the necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation, when Daniel Webster joined them, and Buchanan said to Webster: "We were talking about the Catholic Church, and I, for one, am pretty well convinced that it is necessary to become a Catholic to get to heaven."

"Have you just found that out?" asked Webster. "Why, I've known that for years."

Early in 1844, Bishop Hopkins, of the Protestant Episcopal church of Vermont, published a series of letters on "The Novelties which disturb our peace." As all friends of Christianity were intently watching the progress of the movement which had been begun in England by Froude, Newman and Pusey, Brownson counted on the able and accomplished bishop as one likely to stand forward a powerful champion on their side, and was disappointed and grieved on reading these letters to find the

* Ubi Supra, p. 558.

bishop taking the lead in opposition to that movement, which he regarded as tending towards church unity.

In reviewing the bishop's book,* Brownson shows that the church of England on its own principles was unjustifiable in its schism; exposes the national-church fallacy; and proves that a church is indefensible on any other principles than those of unity, catholicity, and apostolicity.

In this article, as in all his articles during the period of time discussed in this volume, Brownson made it a rule to treat his adversary's opinions with respect, allowing him the same freedom of thought and expression which he claimed for himself; and many letters written by those whom he criticised prove that earnest discussion does not necessarily weaken mutual respect and good feeling. The following letter written by Hopkins on reading the article in refutation of his position is an instance in point, and is in other respects of enough interest to make its insertion proper and agreeable in this connection.

" BURLINGTON, August 19, 1844.

" Reverend and dear sir, —I have read, with great interest, your forcible and ingenious Review of my late letters, entitled, 'The Novelties which disturb our peace.' And if your leisure and inclination permit, I should be glad to have you give a fair and careful reading to another book, published about the same time, and entitled, 'Lectures on the British Reformation.' This request I make, because you labour under a mistake in speaking of the 'Letters' as if I intended to justify the

* Brownson's Works, vol. iv, p. 527.

Reformation *in that production*. Such was by no means my object. Addressing myself solely to the Bishops, Clergy and Laity of our own communion, who are pledged to the principles of the Reformation already, I had a right to assume that point as settled; and therefore my design was limited to the shewing that the novelties which I was opposing were inconsistent with those established views, to which we, at least, stood formally pledged. In the *Lectures*, however, my object was the very different one, of justifying the principles of the Reformation in itself; and if I have failed *there*, I should be much gratified to have you shew my error to your readers, and to myself as one of them. For although my poverty prevents my being one of your subscribers (besides the operation of my general rule, not to subscribe to works of whose *soundness* I am doubtful, whatever their *ability* may be), I nevertheless read your Review, through the kindness of friends, with peculiar pleasure, if not always with conviction.

“ I am aware that I ought, as a matter of customary propriety, to present you with a copy of the book, before I make such a request. And this I would cheerfully do if it were in my power. But I only possess two copies, one for my library, and the other for an occasional loan amongst my little flock. It was printed in Philadelphia, and is in the hands of the publisher. I presume, however, that it must be amongst some of the *trade* in Boston, so that you can borrow it without difficulty.

“ Should you be disposed to gratify me in this matter, and your Review should satisfy me (a very probable thing) that I have not been sufficiently explicit and clear upon the serious point of the corporate character

of the Holy Catholic Church; I shall proceed, if Providence permit, to write out for the press an Essay, of which I prepared a skeleton, on that precise topic. After which I shall have 'said my say,' and shall leave the subject to stronger heads and abler hands, to do with it as it may please them; happy, at least, in this: that I can admire and love the exhibition of high talents, unwavering sincerity, and fearless pursuit of truth, however I may sometimes be compelled to grieve over what seems to me the erroneous results or the dangerous tendencies which minds of the loftiest order are not the least liable to advocate. Happy, too, I trust, in the moderate estimate I have long made of my own comparative rank amongst the literary and theological writers of our day; since (if I do not deceive myself) I have no feeling of emulation to disturb my praise of a brother's superiority; and no uneasy discontent or disappointment, because my own efforts can rise to nothing beyond a respectable mediocrity. The stature of our intellects, like that of our bodies, is just what God has been pleased to make it. And those who, like myself, occupy the middle scale, far below eminence, and yet above contempt, must console themselves with the reflexion, that the absence of extraordinary power, exempts from its corresponding responsibilities.

"Commending you and your labours to the guidance and blessing of the great Bishop and Shepherd of our souls, I remain, "Reverend and dear sir,

"Your faithful friend and brother in Christ,

"JOHN H. HOPKINS.*

"REV. ORESTES BROWNSON."

* Brownson's review of the "Lectures on the Reformation" did not appear until the next year. See his Works, vol. vi, p. 568.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONVERSION OF BROWNSON AND HIS FAMILY.

BROWNSON had advanced so far in his belief in the unity of the Christian church in the first half of 1844, that he abandoned his protestant pulpit and separated from his Unitarian friends. At the same time he bore public testimony to the learning, ability, singleness of purpose, and great moral worth of many of his brethren in the ministry, with whom he had been for many years in some degree associated. But he could no longer reconcile the denial of the Incarnation, of the true divinity and the true humanity of Christ, with faith in Christianity. The reason and necessity of the Gospel and all significance of Christian redemption in the economy of divine providence, are lost without the doctrine of the Incarnation, the union without confusion of the human and divine natures in the one person of Jesus. For the same reason that there could be no access to the Father save by the incarnation of the Word, the mediator, the medium of communion; there could be no continuance of that relation, of access to the Father, unless the incarnation of the Word was continued in "the body of Christ," as St. Paul calls the church. The church, then, as the body of Christ, must be an authoritative body, and its authority divine, not human. If authoritative, it must be infallible, Christ its founder and invisible governor having established and endowed it, as a kingdom supreme and complete in itself, for the

express purpose of governing and teaching all nations. There is but one church of Christ which claims to be infallible : it is, then, idle to seek the true church elsewhere.

Brownson now found himself struggling between contending impulses. If salvation was not attainable out of the true church, there was urgent necessity for joining it ; but in that case he must abandon all hope of the salvation of his friends dying out of the pale of that church, which he was not prepared to do. He determined in May, 1844, to propose this difficulty to the Right Reverend B. J. Fenwick, the Bishop of Boston, with whom he had already a slight acquaintance. The account of this his second interview with the Bishop as related by himself is this :

He received me in a frank and cordial manner, said he read my Review with attention, perceived that I was making some progress towards the church, but he was surprised that I objected to the pope.

“What can be your objections to the pope?”

“I do not object to the pope. Some time ago I was foolish enough to say that the problem of the age is *Catholicism without Popery* ; but I no longer entertain that notion, I have no objection to the church, and the church without the pope would be to me no church at all.”

“Why then, are you not a Catholic?”

“I could be, were it not for these Protestants. I do not like to say they are all wrong, and out of way of salvation ; and if I could discover some ground on which I could be a Catholic without saying so, I should have no difficulty.”

“So, that is your difficulty. But why should that affect you. If our Lord has established his church, and given her authority to teach, why should you refuse to obey him till you satisfy yourself that you may disobey him with safety? God is just, and you may leave your Protestant friends in his hands; for he will not punish them unless they deserve it. If they break the order he has established, obstinately refuse to obey their lawful pastors, and preach from their own head instead of his word, that is no good reason for you to remain where you are and neglect to make sure for yourself.”

“True. But I am not willing to believe that all who live and die out of the pale of the Roman Catholic Church must be finally lost. I wish to be able to find some justification, at least some excuse, for the Protestant movement; and it is this which has kept me back.”

“The inquiry is no doubt an interesting one, but you will find it, probably, somewhat difficult. Have you thus far met with much success?”

“I cannot say I have, and I am almost afraid that I shall not succeed.”

“It is not best to be hasty. The question is serious, and you will do well to inquire further and longer. Perhaps you will find some excuse for the Protestant reformation. If you do, you will not fail to let me know it.”

After some more conversation on the same topic, and on general subjects, and his assuring me that it would give him pleasure to have me call and see him when I found it convenient, I took my leave. A week later, I called again, and he lent me some books; a fortnight later still, I called once more, and requested him to place me in charge of some one who would take the

trouble to instruct and prepare me for admission into the church. He immediately introduced me to his coadjutor, afterwards his successor, who readily charged himself with that task, and performed it with a patience and uniform kindness of which it does not become me to speak. The feelings of the convert towards the spiritual father who has poured on his head the regenerating waters, or heard the story of his life, and in God's stead pronounced over him words of absolution and reconciliation, are too sacred to be displayed.

What most impressed me in this interview with Bishop Fenwick was the firm and uncompromising character of his Catholicity. He used not a simple unkind word in speaking of Protestants; but with all my art,—and I did my best,—I could not extract from him the least conceivable concession. He saw clearly what held me back, and that I believed I was prepared to join the church if I could only have some assurance that individuals dying out of the pale of her communion need not necessarily be despaired of; but neither by word nor tone did he indicate that he had any such assurance to give. He was a Catholic, heart and soul; he had learned the church as the way of salvation, but he had learned no other. What he had received, that could he give; but nothing else. He was not the author of the conditions of salvation, and he could not take the responsibility of enlarging or contracting them. It was well for me that he was thus stern and uncompromising in his Catholicity. A man brought up a Protestant is apt to distrust the sincerity of another's faith, and in general looks upon a well educated and intelligent Catholic priest or bishop as acting a part, or merely speaking from his brief, with-

out any firm conviction of what he professes. He also understands in advance that Catholicity is exclusive and boldly asserts that salvation out of the pale of the church is not possible. If, then, I had found him less uncompromising ; if I had perceived in him the least disposition to soften what seemed to me the severity of the Catholic doctrine, or to conceal or explain it away, I should have distrusted the sincerity of his faith, have failed to give him my confidence, and have lost what I had in his church.*

Brownson was civilly received by Bishop Fenwick's coadjutor, J. B. Fitzpatrick ; but it was several months before they came to a good understanding one of the other. Brownson was reserved in expressing the philosophical views by which he had overcome his difficulties concerning the church, well aware that his instructor, reared in the school of philosophical abstractions, would not relish his doctrine of life and communion, growing out of a system in which the logical order conforms to the order of reality, and the principles of science. The bishop was on his part almost doubtful of the docility of one so bold and independent in thought and expression as his catechumen was known to be, until consenting to waive for the present his philosophical views, Brownson professed himself satisfied with the hackneyed arguments to be found in all controversial and theological writers, and which while admirably adapted to the demonstration of Catholic truth to a mind already believing it, go not far enough back to remove the principal objections to revelation in the minds of unbelievers at the present day.

* Brownson's Works, Vol. xiv, pp. 174 et seq.

Brownson was more intent on the internal life of the church, which proceeds from the indwelling Christ, and makes the church an ever-living church with the same freedom of action in regard to modern society which it exercised in regard to ancient and mediæval civilization. There is no more reason in the nature of things why the church should be at war with modern society than there was for the church's hostility to the society that went before. As the church applied the principles of Catholic truth to the circumstances and wants of society before the reformation, though all in that society was not what the church wished for, so, and in a greater degree, might it apply those principles to the circumstances and wants of our times. Will any one pretend that our present society, our modern civilization, is more irredeemable than any that preceded it? Not every change, it is true, is a progress ; but equally true is it that the human race upon the whole is progressive, advances towards the fulfilment of the divine plan in its creation. The life of the race and the life of the church both proceed from the Word, though in different ways, and to stir up war between them is to put that Word at variance with himself. There is nothing in religion which requires it to be in conflict with humanity ; or the supernatural with the natural. Both are from the same divine origin, and intended to move harmoniously together, in their proper dialectic relation.

The bishop had been trained in a different and less profound school, was familiar with the decisions and the action of the church in all past ages ; but apparently unaware that, while principles and truth are eternal and invariable, their application to the circumstances and

wants of the time must vary from age to age. Because religion was once associated with imperialism and at another time with feudalism, that school are loath to let it live in harmony with individual and social equality, in spite of the fact that the foremost advocates of that equality have been Catholic doctors from St. Peter and St. Paul, St. Gregory and St. Leo, down to Leo XIII.

Brownson, however, was convinced of the necessity of the church, the mystic body of Christ, and of the sacrament of regeneration for acquiring the Christian life ; of real communion with and assimilation of the divine human life with our own for sustaining it ; and of a real, sacramental application to the soul of the merits and sufferings of Christ for restoring it when lost by sin. Convinced also that as Christ lived in his church and the Holy Ghost taught it all truth, and finding nothing in the teachings of that church which his reason rejected, though much which his reason could never attain to or understand, Brownson abjured protestantism and became a Catholic, October 20th, 1844, being forty-one years of age. This was just twenty-two years after he had joined the Presbyterians.

In an oration at the old Broadway Tabernacle in New York, a few weeks later, he compared himself for the past twenty years to one stepping on cakes of ice, each one of which was barely enough to support his weight until he could reach the next, until at last he came to solid ground. Very few of his old associates looked, as Channing had been disposed to look, on his "changes, not as fluctuations, but as steps of rational progress," and they prophesied his return to Protestantism within six months. Had he been as pertinaciously

adherent to his opinions once expressed, be they right or wrong, as are the great mass of writers and speakers; had he not continually sought for light, and followed it when found; had he not diligently investigated the grounds of the faith he professed to hold, he might have escaped the charge of fickleness, indeed; but he would never have grown in the knowledge of truth; he would have been, like most of his contemporaries, no wiser in old age than in youth. Every man is liable to err; but it should seem more logical, more consistent with reason, to reject the error when discovered than to cling to it. To profess to believe what one does not believe is not only unreasonable, but in a preacher infamous; and no man does or can believe what his reason tells him is not true. He may believe what he thinks is above reason, but not what he thinks is against reason. Brownson's religious experience began with Calvinism; but his free and excursive mind soon revolted against that harsh and servile system, the doctrines of which he was satisfied were as contrary to reason as they were inconsistent with the notion of a good and just Creator.

Eliminating therefore from his belief all the peculiarly Presbyterian dogmas, he found himself on the platform of the Universalists. In attempting to defend Universalism, he found, as every Universalist must, that it is necessary to distort the plain sense of Scripture. Then to justify such distortion, he denied the verbal inspiration of the Bible; and soon after all inspiration of every kind. The Scripture thus rejected, he had no basis left to support either Universalism or any other form of Protestantism, and was thrown back on reason or nature alone. The arguments of Universalists are valid against "ortho-

doxy," as they call it, and the rationalist's argument is conclusive against both. The Reformation began in negation; its principle is denial. The logical and inevitable development of denial tends towards nihilism, nothing-arianism, as it used to be called in Boston. The human mind is logical; give it any portion of Christianity without the whole, and it tends to eliminate from its belief all that is Christian, or else to hunt for the complement that shall make what it has of Christianity a dialectic whole, a consistent doctrine of truth.

Thrown back, then, on mere nature, Brownson found himself confronted with the empty and inane, the void and worse than void, the horrible and revolting conclusions to which reason is driven when it abandons revelation. Shivering *in puris naturalibus*, he agreed with Carlyle that the world is too cold for a man to go without clothes, without religion of some kind. He accordingly adopted a sort of natural religion, a worship, however, rather of humanity than of God. Still its aim was the good of mankind. As a Unitarian minister may believe anything or nothing, so long as his congregation is satisfied, he preached his natural religion as a member of that sect. He had put off the old man and at once began to put on the new. There was in his mind a steady growth from that time on, in faith in Christianity; not the Christianity of Presbyterianism or Universalism, but the Christianity of the Catholic Church; and one who was familiar with Catholicity could trace his progress and foresee its issue years before he himself was aware whither he was going. Admitting Christianity, he admitted it as a whole, thinking that if God's word is good for a part, it is good for all; and if it is rational to

accept a part of revealed truth, it is irrational to reject the remainder.

After returning to New York from his brief experiment in school-teaching near Detroit, Brownson taught the school at Elbridge in Onondaga County, New York, for a few months. Among his scholars were the daughters of John Healy, who were about his own age, and as the custom in those days was for the school-teachers to be entertained in the houses of those who could afford that hospitality, the young teacher was for a time the guest of Healy in his turn. John Healy was one of the first settlers in those parts, having come from New Hampshire in his early manhood, and was at that time a little over fifty years of age. He was a man of unusual intelligence, justice, and good nature, who had met with kindness from everybody and success in his affairs as a farmer, and had only kind feelings and good offices towards all the world, even the Indians, who came often to his house. He was very tall, but measured more in girth than in height. A dispute arising as to their weight, Squire Monroe, Ebenezer Earle, and John Healy, supposed to be the three heaviest men in the county, went together to be weighed; and John Healy was found to be the heaviest. At his death he was interred in a small family cemetery in a corner of his farm, and some years later, the farm having been sold, it became necessary to remove the bodies to the general cemetery. The present writer, going to Elbridge in 1856, met Ebenezer Earle then living on the borders of Elbridge and Skaneateles, who repeated the story of his having weighed less than Healy, but added, "If he were to weigh with me now, I guess it would be different." Earle at this

time was simply huge. However he confessed he was mistaken again ; for when Healy's body was exhumed it was said to be petrified.

June 19, 1827, Brownson was married at Elbridge, N. Y., to Sally Healy, second daughter of John Healy and Dolly Rude, born at Elbridge, January 17, 1804. Sally Healy was a tall, slim girl with regular and refined features, and the most beautiful dark eyes such as are seen so frequently amongst the Spanish women. She was better educated than was often the case in rural districts ; fond of reading, especially in the Bible, in history, and in poetry ; and gifted with marvellous power of memory ; could always quote correctly any text she wanted to use for an argument or illustration, was exact in the dates and facts she had once learned, and seemed able to repeat many passages of the poets she had read, which last comprised, amongst others ; Milton, Pope, Dryden, Young, Thompson, and of course Watts. Her husband has been sometimes called a "logic-grinder," and the general opinion was that in his nature the intellectual predominated to the disadvantage of the affectionate part of his character. No man was ever judged more falsely. The truth is, that feeling in him was stronger than intellect, that it was the predominant element in his character. There is, perhaps, nothing in a man's disposition about which more erroneous opinions are almost universally formed than this of the strength of the affections. A self-seeking, cold-hearted, calculating man, who looks at every thing with a view solely to his own satisfaction or emolument, naturally cultivates the attractive, pleasant exterior and manners, which will contribute to the gaining of his purpose, and wins the

reputation of amiability and good nature ; whilst the warm-hearted, generous one is quick to every emotion, whether of anger or sympathy. That Brownson was quick to wrath is indisputable, but it is also true that his wrath was as evanescent as the lightning ; and moreover, like the lightning, left the atmosphere clearer and more exhilarating. It should also be remarked that Brownson's ire was seldom or never stirred by personal animosity, but generally, if not always, by the love of truth and justice. It was almost always a denial of a truth, or what he believed to be a truth, or the failure to apprehend it, that aroused his anger. Personal abuse, of which he had all his life long his full share, seldom provoked resentment ; but when he had explained a point so clearly that it seemed to him that any child might understand it, and the person with whom he was conversing failed to take notice of the explanation, but went on with the same misapprehension, then he was exasperated and was rude in his language. Indeed it almost seems as though he might have said with David that he was eaten up with zeal for God and truth. Yet what those who were not intimate with Brownson represented as fierceness, bitterness of feeling, uncharitableness, those who knew him better ascribed to quickness and intensity of feeling : what a stranger might mistake for anger was set down to his love of mystifying the ignorant pretenders who fancied they knew him thoroughly : when friends assured the public that it had wronged him, he himself, while grateful for their goodness of heart, would by no means admit that he had received any injustice from the public that needed to be resented, or that his condition was one that called for commiseration. A

very unfaithful portrait, in this respect, was often drawn by a class of weekly journals very common in the days referred to, and perhaps not altogether unknown in the present, devoted to general literature, that is to say, devoted to nothing in particular, but usually filled with scraps and anecdotes, silly romances and long, tedious, sentimental love-stories, commonly termed light reading, or it might be, *polite* literature. No doubt, there are many tastes to be cared for, and this kind of journal must meet a want in the community, and perhaps may do good by affording comparatively innocent amusement, and perhaps also by preparing the way for something better, more solid and substantial. Their literary portion is usually in bad taste and clumsily written, planned and conceived in the spirit of the literary charlatan, rather than that of the master, wanting in simplicity and point, as though the art of writing consisted in the facility with which one can collocate a great variety of high-sounding words into a long, heavy, lumbering sentence, with little or no meaning. Now nothing can be more mortifying to a man of real worth, who has toiled through a long life of hard study his way up into honorable distinction, or if you will, into notoriety, than to find himself obliged to sit for his portrait to every apprentice boy who may be ambitious of trying his inexperienced hand in sketching, or rather, in daubing it; and this equally whether such apprentice would bedaub with praise or bespatter with censure. When a man is really before the public in a manner that makes it necessary for newspapers to comment on his character, there is no objection to his being the subject of public remark. But this dragging a man without any public reason from the

shades of private life to be stared at by an idle multitude is deserving of severe rebuke. What a literary man gives out to the public is matter of public criticism, but his private life remains as sacred as any other man's. Besides, the portrait drawn is rarely a resemblance. It requires both talent and knowledge of the original to be able to give a faithful likeness. A much more truthful account of himself is given by Brownson in his *Charles Elwood*, where he says: "There may be intellectual beings, who are moved by thought alone,—beings who never feel, but live always in mere abstractions. Such persons are dependent never on the state of the affections, and are influenced not at all by the circumstances around them. Of these beings I know not much. I am not one of them. I have believed myself to have a heart as well as a head, and that in me, what the authors of a new science I have just heard of, call the affective nature, is stronger, by several degrees, than the intellectual. The fact is, my feelings have generally controlled my belief, not my belief my feelings. This is no uncommon case. As a general rule, would you gain the reason, you must first win the heart. This is the secret of most conversions. There is no logic like love. And by the by, I believe that the heart is not only often stronger than the head, but in general a safer guide to truth. At any rate, I have never found it difficult to assign plenty of good reasons for doing what my heart has prompted me to do." *

In his home, Brownson was an affectionate husband and father, in spite of the quickness and irritability of his temper. A pastor of a congregation is very apt to grow

* Brownson's Works, vol. iv, p. 240.

arbitrary and somewhat despotic, when much deference is paid him by his people,—which fact might furnish an argument for clerical celibacy,—for such pastor naturally carries that arbitrariness into his domestic life, and if the truth were known, it would very likely appear that in most clergymen's families it is a burden that wives and children have to bear. Brownson's wife was so patiently constituted that whatever she may have suffered from marital harshness, she was always affectionate and loving to husband and children, ever cheerful and devoted to their comfort and happiness. Of her it may be said that "her dignity consisted in being unknown to the world; her glory was the esteem of her husband; her pleasure the happiness of her family." One of her greatest sorrows was the unchristian character her husband's writings and speeches assumed a few years after their marriage. She had been taught the so-called Orthodox faith and was a devout believer in it; but she knew that it was hopeless to try to bring her husband back to his belief by attempting to argue the matter with him. She could only wait and pray, patiently and hopefully. The years passed by, and Brownson not only accepted all of Christianity which his wife believed, but went further and embraced all of Christianity which Christ had taught. He often read his articles to his wife before publication, and attached great importance to her judgment; indeed, he often said that intellectually she was his superior. She was advancing towards Catholicity at the same pace as her husband, and embraced it immediately after him. The children who were too young to need instruction were baptized with their mother, two others just before her, and the last two a few months afterwards.

It is a striking proof of Brownson's generosity of mind that when he became convinced of his duty to enter the Catholic Church, the only ground on which he hesitated was his regard for Protestants. He said that he was loath to assert by such action that they had no part in the church of Christ, and also that he for a time delayed, in the belief that he could induce more to join that church if he addressed them as a Protestant minister than if as a Catholic convert. Not a word of the sacrifices he had to make,—sacrifices common to every American becoming a Catholic, and sacrifices peculiar to his own position in the community. Determined to save his soul at whatever cost, he thought not of sacrifices, but of gain; and in his humility declared he had brought nothing into the church but his sins.

APPENDIX.

MISS LYNCH'S LETTER.—HEGKER LETTERS.

DURING the two years immediately preceding Brownson's reception into the Catholic communion, his progress in that direction was visible to all his friends. The greater number retained their respect and friendship, though after he took the great step, his intercourse with them became much rarer. His old friend, Isaac B. Peirce of Trenton Falls, on returning home from a visit to him at Mt. Bellingham, meeting with an accident that injured his right hand, writes (July 28, 1843) of the injury, and adds: "but if I can make out to write legibly, shall be satisfied, as I write to an old friend, and I would still hope *brother* in the Gospel, notwithstanding your Catholic views."

Some, like Miss Lynch, who agreed with him when he pared Christianity down to mere natural religion, looked unfavorably on his assertion of the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the Gospels: but others, like Isaac Hecker, advanced along with him.

In the belief that much of the correspondence of both those persons would interest the reader, a large selection from it is here inserted :—the lady's first.

MISS LYNCH'S LETTERS.

PROVIDENCE, June 1, 1841.

I assure you that it was with much pleasure I recognized the good old fashioned, long letter in the hand-

writing of *mon confesseur*. I was thinking the other day that I am getting *so old* that I must put away childish things as no longer becoming. I think I am naturally child-like, and I fear that this feeling has led me to forget my years. Why, my friend, you are not more than ten years my senior, and recollecting how much sooner the female mind comes to maturity than in your sex, you are not more than five! Is it not time for the woman to put aside the child? You will ask, whither I am tending. I was analysing my own feeling in calling you my confessor, which was or is a child-like feeling of dependence on others. Then I said to myself that that feeling I must throw off. Would to heaven it were not so, that I might always be what I have been in feeling! I might under some circumstances.

You are asking why I did not answer your letter, or rather, finish my own. So I promised to do on Sunday. I was reading a book that I wanted to finish and give you some account of, and that was the reason why I delayed. You will smile, perhaps, when I tell you it is on magnetism. How I wish you could see it! I think it a remarkably philosophical and reasonable explanation of hitherto unexplained facts. While I was in the midst of reading it, your letter came, full of facts that I was just at the explanation of, and which but for the explanation I might have considered the "mind's desiring phantasy." You know that in the *transcendental me* I have never had much faith, and although I can in general understand transcendentalism, through the alembic of your brain, and receive it too, yet when you "wander in eternity" my understanding acting as a dead weight keeps me on this miserable planet, and I cannot soar

with you. You may imagine then that it gave me no little pleasure to be able to meet you, or jog after you and your speculations, though furnished with a more clumsy apparatus than wings.

Shall I tell you, then, something about this book? It is affirmed that certain phenomena are produced by one person upon another; sensation through the ordinary channels is destroyed; but yet the patient becomes cognisant of the sensations of the magnetiser and is affected by his will, and he can perceive objects at a distance by some other means than the senses. He then proves that ordinary sensation is produced by motion of the nerves, and the probability is, thinking is also. This motion is communicated by external nature or is spontaneous. Then he dilates on the probability of an ethereal medium penetrating all substances, of which light, heat, etc. are manifestations. The human will has the power of setting this in motion. Oh dear! what a lame account I am giving you! It is too bad to murder such a book. So, I had better stop. I thought I could tell you all about it, but I want your generalizing organ. You will believe that it is clear, I hope, for it convinced *me*, thick-headed and sceptical as I am.

Doubtless, then, you either agitated this great ocean of ether (you *are* an agitator, you know) when you saw a certain spectre and were thus in absolute communication, or a certain configuration of brain took place which produces the thought of that spectre when bodily present. Really, I was indisposed on the day you mention and asleep part of the afternoon; so, I might have been summoned to Boston without knowing it. I have no recollection of the circumstances though I returned from New

York the Sunday after I wrote you, when I neither saw nor heard any thing remarkable, and I am not sensible of any effect on myself from temporary change of air. Since my return I have had a severe cold, but I have recovered now. It is just about a year since I made my first descent upon Boston,—a year according to the almanac. I have made you six visits; that is doing pretty well for the first year, in the way of *cousining*. What a strange dream this life is! to say nothing of the occasional nightmare. I am beginning to lean a little towards idealism. How can't it be avoided when we recollect that probably every species of animated beings perceives external nature under an entirely different aspect, and that when the little machine that I call *me* is unwound and the silver chord broken Nature will no longer exist for me?

I do not know how to reply to all the good things you say of me—only if you think them I am glad, and I hope I may prove worthy of them all. As for you, if the world has done you injustice, have you not so much the greater need of friends? You know my opinion of the world too well to suspect me of being very sensitive to its opinion as long as I have God and Justice on my side. We have had Mr. Alcott here. I should think a pure-minded, saintly kind of man, is he not?

How beautiful every thing appears at this season! It seems to me there was never so delightful a Spring, or my vision may be clearer than heretofore. I cannot keep busy even if I would. The religious element of my character has developed, almost entirely, the past year. I had, before that time, a kind of vague, unfathomed sense of God, but he was too mighty and too distant to

excite any feeling but that of awe. I feel differently now. As I have said many times before, your writings and conversation have influenced my opinions more than any thing else ever did.

I hope you are enjoying this delightful day on Mount Bellingham. Give my best love to your excellent wife and children, and believe me,

Very truly yours,

ANNE C. LYNCH.

PROVIDENCE, June 27, 1841.

Thank you, my kind friend, for your letter, and not for one in particular, but for all of them. As a correspondent, you are unrivalled and worthy of all imitation and of a much better return than I can make. But I have warned you of my deficiencies, and you cannot be disappointed if you find my letters "flat, stale, and unprofitable." But you know I am only a chrysalis now, and when I am once roused and my mind becomes really active, I may perhaps in some measure compensate for this barrenness—that is, if the said rousing ever takes place. I received the Quarterly several days since and read it through directly. The first article I liked very much. You know how much pleased I was with that on Emerson, and my pleasure was not diminished by reading a second time. It expresses just what very many of the *faithful* would wish to have said if they could have uttered it. Is it not the province of genius to give palpableness to the forms of truth and beauty that exist unexpressed in every human soul, as a fluid just ready to chrySTALLIZE needs but a shock, or a thread of wire,

and it assumes form and beauty? "The *generality of man*," says our friend A. B. C., "the commonality of the race, is ninety-nine hundredths of every man;" and the other hundredth I suppose is the genius of the few who reveal to the ninety-nine the beauty and truth there is in themselves. This being my belief, I do not estimate genius as many do. It is more to be a man than a genius. The Secret of the Lord you have interpreted to my entire satisfaction. Our friend's article on Catholicism I thought rather cloudy, perhaps the clouds were in the mind of the reader though. Your political articles I read and liked *of course* very much. In short I like the whole number, like its illustrious predecessors, very much indeed; but I feel disposed to cavil a little at the tone of the last page, the notice of Mr. Spear's book, and this because it seems to me to convey a wrong impression of your belief. It is of the highest consequence, I think, that you should be explicit. There are, no doubt, thousands of minds that you have awakened to spiritual consciousness, and put in the way of truth, and you must not abandon them. (You see we are going to hold on to you). Have I then mistaken your creed, or do you believe that Jesus was a man born like other men and who lived and died like other men, whose soul was quickened with an intenser love of God, or good, and of his fellowmen, than that of any other individual whose life is recorded, that this love of God or good, and of man constitutes the Christ spirit, and is and may be manifested in various degrees in different individuals? If, as I have thought, this is your belief, please explain to me what you intend to convey by "the true God incarnated in the man Jesus, our Saviour, the

son of God, one with the Father, through whom alone we can be cleansed from all sin and presented blameless at the last day." This seems to me very different from something you have said elsewhere, and it really troubles me not a little. Any one, it appears to me, would understand from this that you were strictly orthodox. If you are so, very well; but if you are what I have believed you to be in opinion, is it too much on my part to entreat you, in the name of truth and religion, not to utter a word that shall tend to prolong the reign of *Cant*? You will smile at my warmth (the thermometer is at 90), but apathetic as I generally am, there are some things that will rouse me. So, then, explain to me what you mean in your next letter.

The book that you ask me the title of is called *Facts in Mesmerism*, by Chauncey Hare Townshend. Dr. Channing is about having it republished, I understand. Have you witnessed any experiments in magnetism in Boston? I heard there had been some very interesting cases.

We, in Providence, are going on very much after the old manner. Ma has returned from Vermont much improved, and sends her affectionate regards to you all. I have just read Mr. Parker's sermon, which I like exceedingly. Although he says nothing that you have not already said, yet I rejoice, exult, shout tedeums at every new voice I hear speaking out boldly for God and Humanity. You will find that even I am fanatical in my way.

Remember me affectionately to Mrs. Brownson. Tell her I thank her for her invitation and although I am by no means indebted to her in the way of visiting I

shall be very happy to avail myself of it. Sometime during the Summer I really wish you and she could make us a visit before we move. Our yard is looking finely now, and we have a tree full of ripe cherries which if the boys were only here they would enjoy. Can you not arrange matters so as to come? It would delight me very much and mama too. I trust you will come if possible, and believe me truly yours,

A. C. L.

PROVIDENCE, August 4th, 1842.

My dear Mr. Brownson,—I have just this moment received your letter of the 3rd, and hasten to answer it without delay, and to vindicate myself from the charge of being a neglectful and an unfaithful friend. Your letter previous, I received four weeks ago, and I intended to answer it as soon as I could make arrangements to visit you, which I was anxious to do. A fortnight passed before I could determine and since that time I had my mind so occupied that I have neither thought, read, nor written. We have had and have still friends staying with us from Vermont. I have three little girls to take charge of in the family at this time. My uncle is out of town and left me with his writing, and withal I have not been sick—I have not been positively ill, but so inactive that every exertion was painful—a state, I suppose, you can scarcely conceive of. I can only say that I have determined every day through July to write you, and that I have not done so for the reason above mentioned. I have been annoyed and occupied with the cares of every day and have not had the physical strength to overcome them. You accuse me wrongfully of retiring

from the circle where I once asked to be admitted. I shall never voluntarily retire. You say that my letters have been very formal and reserved—that they are so, I should doubt. But they may have altered somewhat in their tone, and if they have done so, I will tell you why. You know that our acquaintance and correspondence was begun entirely on my part—and in consequence of your expressing sentiments and opinions that to me were revelations. To me you were really and in truth greater than Moses and the prophets—and I did not hesitate to tell you so. I would have been ungrateful to have done so, as I said at the time. Of late your views have changed, or your late writings do not convey to me the same ideas that the earlier ones did. They contain many doctrines that I do not respond to. This is through no fault of yourself or me either. I am sure we saw certain things in the same light, or I fancied you saw as I did, and now I fancy you do not, and of course my intellectual sympathy cannot be as entire as it was—but this does not, in the least regard, affect my regard for you, my admiration of your wonderful powers of mind, or my gratitude to you as the one who has delivered me from “darkness into marvellous light.” You could not destroy my obligation to you, if you would. If then my letters have not harmonised with your mood, this is the reason, and all the reason. As a friend I regard you, and ever must do. So I beg of you not to take any rash oaths about my caprice. I read the letter to Dr. Channing. I read it with pleasure as I do every thing you write, although I do not agree with the sentiments—many of them—not as I understand them. The Quarterly Review I received at the same time and with the first article par-

ticularly I was delighted. Mr. Osgood remarked of your review of Zanoni "it was bringing a battle-axe to crush a butterfly." The battle-axe glistened in it, to be sure. Zanoni pleased me more than it did you, however. At all events, I was very much interested in the Review, and could not controvert, though I had not perceived, the defects in reading it. I had hoped to have *brought* back Constant before this time. I shall send it this afternoon with this. I will endeavor, if it is possible, to visit you in the course of a few weeks. Ma is to leave town next week and I cannot leave the little girls at present. It would give me great pleasure to see you again. Give my affectionate regards to Mrs. Brownson, and tell her I hope to see her again before long.

If it is any way possible, I shall come early in September, if not before. Ma desires to be affectionately remembered to you and Mrs. Brownson.

With regard to my getting married, I can only say that my prospects are just the same as two years ago. I fear I shall have to look up somebody and marry in self-defence, my friends seem so determined to have me out of the way.

If my peace is made and your anger propitiated, I shall hope to hear from you before long, and I cannot believe but you will relent in view of the extenuating circumstances I have mentioned.

Ever truly and sincerely yours,

ANNE C. LYNCH.

PROVIDENCE, September 13, 1842.

My dear Mr. Brownson,—I thought when I received your last that I should have seen you before this time,

but it has been quite impossible for me to leave home. Ma has been to Connecticut for some weeks, and since her return I have been expecting friends to see me, and not knowing when they were coming, I have been obliged to remain. I am still expecting my former pupils, Miss Gardiners, some time this month. At all events, I intend to pass a day or two with you early in October if it is possible. As my Reverend Confessor will have much to absolve me from, I trust he will, by that time, be in a genial humor. Else I should fear being sent to Purgatory "unannointed and unannealed."

The past week has been quite a busy and a gay one, it being that of commencement. I could not avoid contrasting it with that of three years since, and several others did the same, and all say (except the infidels and conservatives) that the exercises of that year were better than they had ever been. The contrast was more striking as we had a discourse from Dr. Barnes of Philadelphia on American Literature,* common-place and tame as it could well be.

Speaking of conservatives, I understand how such people can be, and it seems to me they are the true infidels after all. It is only by this explanation that I can account for them. For are they not those who from their want of faith in an overruling providence feel that the universe is resting upon them and if things are moved a little out of place the whole establishment will come tumbling down? They have no idea of the sublime ends and designs God is working out through men, his instruments, but feel that they have the sustaining, if not the

* This was also the subject of Brownson's Oration at Brown University at Providence in September 1839.

planning of the whole, therefore if they can only keep things together as they are now, by patching up and propping up and glossing over, they fancy they have exercised the highest wisdom. But as the butterfly, perfected in the chrysalis, casts off the dead covering and comes forth radiant and winged, so will not society come forth from the benumbing fetters of conservatism? I have the most perfect charity for conservatives, for with their faith I see clearly how every little shock will speak to them of the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds—as if they could be crashed. But I have philosophised a whole page. I have not read but one book, and that a tale of one volume since the first of July. I hope you will have something to tell me when I see you of your advancement sufficient to atone for my retrogression

Is it true that the Quarterly, the immortal Quarterly is going to be married to the Democratic? I suppose it must be so, for I think I saw the publishment. I feel about it very much as I do about my old beaux getting married. I am glad if they are better off,—but I miss them, and so I shall the Quarterly. And speaking of marrying reminds me that my friend Dean is about to be swallowed up in that insatiate gulf. He is to be married to a lady of Massachusetts next week.

Remember me affectionately to Mrs. Brownson and your children. Say to Mrs. Brownson that it is not for want of inclination that I have not seen her so long. Ma desires also to be remembered to you.

Truly yours,

ANNE C. L.

PROVIDENCE, November 27, 1842.

My dear friend,—I believe in my last note I promised that a letter should be forthcoming. Carlyle says, "Do the duty that lies nearest thee, the next will already have become plainer." I often try to act upon this hint—that is, when I act at all, you know. I am torpid a great part of the time, in which state I scarcely think I am accountable for what I *do not* do. The fulfilling the above promise has then never seemed the duty nearest till to-night, and to-night I will write.

I received the last Review and the Democratic with it, soon after my last note. I read the Review attentively. I cannot say that I fully agree with you, however much I may admire, not as yet. Perhaps I shall come round to your standpoint after a while, but it has taken you some time to get there, and you will not expect me to reach the ground as soon as you do. Besides, you know very well that I have not by any means a metaphysical mind—it is straight forward in its action, and not at all at home in profound metaphysical questions. It would be superfluous to say what I think of the Review as to its *answerability*, etc., but you recollect telling that you would not accept a statement or an argument because you could not answer it.

About three weeks ago, I went to New York with Mrs. Osgood. I had some business with my brother. I had two poems that I wanted to have published in the Democratic Review since the Boston Quarterly is no more. I sent one of them to Mr. O'Sullivan with a request that he would call, but as he did not get the note in time I did not see him. I have the other. Since

my return I do not know whether he intends to publish them or not. I did not have a very pleasant visit and was quite glad to get back again. Everybody in New York seems so cold and selfish that it is quite enough to freeze one—me at least.

I have quite a little family of my own now—and go out very little except for exercise. I am quite as happy for it, or happier than I should be to go among people who care nothing for me. How far do you think it desirable to carry independence? Do you think with Bulwer that

There is no bond that mocks at fate
Like man's with his own heart?

I think that when we find so little in the external we can do no less than to substitute as far as possible self-reliance for dependence on others.

I was much pleased with your article on the community. Sam Larned told that you said to him that you hoped they would merit half of it. Whereat I was much amused.

Where are you lecturing, and on what subjects, and where do you propose lecturing this winter? Shall you not pass through Providence? I have three young ladies and two children with me, and they occupy much of my time and attention. I attempt to make it as agreeable as possible however to all parties and succeed better than heretofore. Tell me if you are still preaching, and what you are thinking and doing, or shall I refer to the Democratic Review? I hear you have encountered the "lions of the North," the English Transcendentalists. Do give me an account of the interview. I was out of town

when they came here and did not see them. Do you think they will revolutionize the country? I intended to have taken with me on my last visit a few sheets of the folio-post, as I have noticed for some time that your supply was out.

Remember me to Mrs. Brownson and believe me as ever truly yours,

ANNE C. L.

HECKER LETTERS.

NEW YORK, January the 7th, 1843.

My dear friend,—I received your letter last week. It gave me a great deal of satisfaction to hear you had taken such an interest in my brother's afflictions: they are such I think you will be able to give him that advice and encouragement which he needs. He has, since he has become acquainted with you, always thought more of what you said than any one of his family. His disease I always have thought arose from too much exercise of mind, and in my telling him so, doing my best to check that tendency, it has made him keep all his feelings and thoughts to himself. Therefore I think you will be able to do us a favor if it is not asking too much. You can get out of him more of his feelings than we can. In his last letter he asks us to give him our advice. He says he wants to go to Brook Farm and study one or two languages. If I had not already felt that his disease was brought on him by too much study, I would gladly give him that advice. I should like to hear from you in regard to it. The letter we received from him when we received yours would have given us a great deal of un-

easiness if we had not received at the same time one from you explaining the condition he was in when he wrote it. The last letter we received from him we found a decided improvement which I fear if he follows out his own desires will call those nervous spells to return more frequently. In the whole course of his sickness he has had much his own way. He was always better when he was expecting something or was about to undertake a journey. Any thing like physical labor mentioned to him had a very disagreeable effect upon him. When he got what he expected or finished what he undertook he would get such spells of despair that he would make us all feel bad for his sake. Any thing he undertook, we found it necessary not to cross him, but give him encouragement, hoping for the better, thinking some unknown circumstances would restore him to us as he once was. The physician he had, thought if he could have his mind employed in some physical employment where the mental could be united, he would get better. I hope you will be able to discover some better remedy or cure for him, being that you can get a better explanation from him than we can. Mother thinks he is under a severe religious change, or under peculiar convictions which she thinks all persons must have before they are Christians, in a more or less degree. The only thing she thinks he is looking for or wants is a giving up of his whole mind to Christ, and then he would be relieved. If any such thing should exist I think he must have already explained to you ; if so, would be glad to hear. She often says she hopes Mr. Brownson will be a spiritual guide or Father to him. If my brother wants any thing I know you will assist him, and if it lies in our

power to repay you, it shall not be wanting on our part. He may let you know more of his pecuniary wants than he would us; if so, be so kind and let us know. There is no person I could have selected for him to stay with sooner than yourself; and if you think it would do him no harm to stay at Brook Farm and study, I will be satisfied and I will do for him what is necessary. I am sorry to have to trouble you so much with our family affairs, but it has in this case been necessary.

I have been this last week to hear Bishop Hughes lecture in the Tabernacle. His subject was on civilization. He gave a very interesting lecture. He spoke two hours long, and interested his audience the whole time, and now and then he received bursts of applause. He undertook to show that it was Christianity alone advanced civilization. He showed it in so plain a manner that it was very interesting. The incidents he hit upon were so descriptive of the Brotherhood of the race and the perfection of the idea of Humanity I thought sometimes I was hearing you. The hall was crowded to overflowing, so that many had to leave without hearing him.

I have written this letter while my wife is at church, and have had to rock the cradle. If you find in some places not much connection you must look over it.

Yours truly,

JOHN HECKER.

MR. O. A. BROWNSON.

Friday, half past 3 o'clock.

Dear friend,—I have returned this afternoon from Alcott's, and am as much pleased with the people and spirit there as I anticipated. I met a Mr. Bower on visit there, and in returning he gave me the "Reasons" which you will find with this. After I had read them I remarked that you had put forth similar views. He wished me to let you see them, which I promised. Would you please to preserve them until I see you again?

I do not know but that my mind will lead me to make at least a trial at Fruitland, as they call their place. Mr. Alcott seemed very desirous that I should come, and perhaps I may. I made a visit to the Shakers while there, and a lesson of self-denial I did receive from them. I had an intimate and interesting conversation with them.

I go to Brook Farm this afternoon.

Your son,

ISAAC HECKER.

NEW YORK, October 16, 1843.

Dear friend,—It is not in my power to express to you the very great pleasure it gave me to hear from you that the Review is to be recommenced. I regret that I had grown somewhat lukewarm, superficially so, to the importance of the religious revolution which is now in the process of growing. It was my apparent silence on the Church, affected perhaps by the influence of the society in which I have moved; still it was necessary to have this susceptibility of their influence to be able to understand and appreciate their movements and spirit,

not having a priori perceived any vital sin in the men or measures ; for susceptibility may lead to vice as well as virtue. In lending myself to it I have gained in the period I was from New York a very fruitful experience. Underlying and of infinitely more importance seems to me the church movement than these personal, social, and political reforms, it being the soul centre of all life and reform, and as men and women become conscious of their own deep wants and those of Humanity, so will they labor in and out of season for the realization of that Catholic Church foreshadowed in the past, lost sight of by Luther and his coadjutors in his movement, reseen in our day by the inspired men active in a counter movement, tho' much more than merely a counter movement.

If you arrange matters as you desire and start the Review it will give me much, as well as my brothers pleasure to aid in any way in our power. Should you not have the opportunity offered to you which you would prefer to a course of lectures delivered without any other connection, we will consider it a labor of love to arrange matters to suit your other engagements and the public. There is no room to doubt that the announcement of your name would collect a very large audience and especially with the subjects you propose. Let us know in time when you would desire to stop here and deliver your lectures in season, if necessary for us to prepare for them. I have understood, not being there, that last Sabbath morning Mr. Channing in speaking of your three last published articles on government which he pronounced as calculated to excite a very great interest, he took occasion to speak of you as a man, which he did in the very highest terms, and with great warmth and

eloquence. I regret much that I was not there. Greeley has noticed your address and promised a renote of it. Godwin and others I have supplied with it. Mackenzie has started a newspaper in opposition to the renomination of Martin ; perhaps he has sent you a copy, if not, I will see that it is done.

Orestes is then going. May it be a trial which will increase his strength and virtue. Remember me to your wife who I am sensible of deep indebtedness to for her goodness.

Believe me to be yours truly and ever grateful,

ISAAC.

Our mill is quite prosperous.

December 14, 1843.

The necessity for a medium through which the spirit can act,—that man as man can be no reformer,—and that the church is the only institution which has for its object the bettering of men's *souls*, by giving to them a diviner love (all other institutions make only the pretension of giving freedom for the activity of that which we are); are clear and important truths to me ; to whom I am indebted for these truths it would be unnecessary for me to say to you. The distinction you draw between Plato and Christ is an important fact. But I will not say that Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato are to me as miraculous men as Jesus was, but for my life, it is impossible for me to keep him out from the same category. I can no more account how the past could produce such men as they were than how it could produce Jesus. Nevertheless the dogma of the miraculous birth, the incarnation, I should

be very glad to give up under my present state of mind. What rules the birth of men is and perhaps always will remain a mystery. I cannot see how the sinful children of Adam could give birth to such a divine being as Jesus Christ, and I confess to a degree, how they could give birth to many other great men called providential. I would not reason God out of the Universe. No, I feel He is ever present, but I know of no solid argument which makes these facts plain, comprehensible; and I must most likely fall back upon authority, leaving them to the domain of faith. The question has arisen in my mind, dear friend, about the immortality of Christ, or in other words, what relation does he bear to the present church? Where is he? and the Sacraments, the medium through which he imparts his life to those who duly receive them? or did he once for all give at the time he was upon the earth all that was to be given, and that and no more is transmitted to this age through the Church and to us through the Sacraments? or are they both combined? I shall have the pleasure soon, I hope, of seeing you in person when these and many other thoughts will be readily responded to.

I have read over your letter again, and find that you are to be in Baltimore the last Wednesday in December, and that you prefer giving lectures here in the forepart of January. This will, if you stop here before you go on to Baltimore, which I suppose you will, give us the opportunity of preparing the proper arrangements for them while you are at Baltimore. If you think otherwise let us know, and we will arrange matters sooner. The two courses of lectures that are now being delivered, the Mercantile and Lyceum, are the poorest that have

ever been offered to the public. The Mercantile commenced in the Tabernacle, but had to go back into their own room, they were so poorly attended. Therefore I think we may reasonably expect a good attendance at yours: although the present rage appears to be for music, still the taste for good lectures is not abated.

I hope you will be here over one Sunday, so as to give the individuals who attend Channing's discourses an opportunity of hearing you, I mean you an opportunity of telling them some wholesome truths.

Did you read an article editorial in the Commercial about a fortnight since on your late articles in the Democratic Review?

That you will, kind friend, give us the pleasure of receiving you when you visit this city, if no other place offers to you which you prefer, we sincerely wish.

I shall always remember you with inexpressible gratitude, and your kind wife. My past seems to me like a dream, and so it is, but a day dream. The deeper we drink of life, the more mysterious it seems.

The Episcopal Church is well, but I cannot join a Church which asks no more of me *practically* than what I am. I asked Height his views of individual, social and political. Alas, that I had not asked the latter.

Yours truly,

ISAAC.

Monday, January 21, 1844, N. Y.

Dear friend,—We have anticipated your presence or a letter from you ever since you spoke of coming on here, and we could not imagine what could have delayed

your coming except you were unwell or your family. Is it either of these, or some other cause? Be so kind as to inform us when you have the leisure.

Horace Greeley asked in the Tribune of last Saturday if we were not to have O. A. Brownson on here to lecture before the season closes? Are we? Your views of progress and reform seem to have an effect upon all those who consider them. Mr. Channing spoke of them in his discourse last Sunday morning in a way that it seemed to me as if they had had an influence upon him. If they only could be more widely disseminated! The present views and movements for reform around us seem to me to be very defective and partial, so necessarily from the nature of their origin. Protestantism is reëxhibiting to the world so well as it knows how the need of institutions and orders already existing in the Catholic Church. The different institutions in the Catholic Church are the organized wants of men under the Christian dispensation and it seems to me they will respond to the wants of the race so long as it is under the Christian dispensation. Doubtless the growth of the race will require new orders, etc. We do not find the demand for new institutions, etc., in Catholic countries nor among Catholics. Is this to be attributed to their want of vitality? or our disorder? It sometimes seems to me that this constant demand for reform has become a habit. If we would have divine Families, Associations and Communities, let us go about making them in quietness, in meekness, as speedily as possible. Do like St. Bernard. The attempt of Mr. Penn seems to me to have been as imposing as it promised success for the establishing a new order of society. Alas, and what is its fruit?

No man has a right to demand of society more than he is himself.

Those I have met who have read your Review have read it with great interest. Is it not necessary to many to understand the force and importance of your present arguments and views to have read your Essays on the Church in the Christian World? How different is the view of Leroux of Berkeley than the one published in Blackwood in 1841, two years ago if I am right! Is your Review as well supported as you expected?

The members of our family are all well. Have you heard from Orestes?

Remember me to your kind wife and believe me to be,

Yours truly with love and deep gratitude,

ISAAC.

(Not dated, but postmarked March 9, 1844.)

Dear friend,—I feel and perceive the need of advice and counsel in the present event of my life. This being so, leads me to you for there is no one who I look up to with so much confidence and in whose judgment I put so much trust as in yours.

When I left New England my supposition was that the opportunity was offered to me at home to do all that I saw men around me doing; therefore I left and came here to effect what seemed then to me probable and possible to effect here.

I have lived and labored up to this present moment to realize in life in business the spirit which animates me, and tho' having ameliorated some certain outward condi-

tions, I now perceive the impracticability of my going farther in this direction, and am now at a stand-still with an irresistible energy laid upon me to do, to live. A new step seems inevitable. Since I have seen the impossibility of doing more in the direction in which I supposed my life purpose might be accomplished my interest has been gradually decreasing and my energy in that direction constantly failing and my attention has been drawn in another way. My sense of duty made me feel the impossibility of devoting an equal amount of energy with my brothers in the labor of our business. To do this and to study for the intention of a different end at the same time was impossible. At present I find myself in this predicament with my body here and my soul and my heart somewhere else. Almost useless to others, and benefitting myself very little. The step I contemplate taking is to devote my whole energies and time for the purpose of becoming a laborer in the cause of the church. So far as I can interpret my purpose of being and my life reveals itself it seems to flow in that direction and I am now ready to embark *not without*, I confess, *great timidity* upon the tide which shall carry me to that end.

The question with me now is, what are the wisest and most prudent means for me to adopt? Two answers present themselves which I submit to your judgment. The first is to go through the necessary preparations to enter college, and to enter it when prepared. To this answer I will submit to you a few objections, which appear to have some weight with me.

I would have to devote myself for a great length of time *exclusively* to the accomplishment of the classical languages. This I would have no objection to if I were

younger, but now I have. Again, there are many books through which it is required for every student to wade, which in my circumstances it does not seem to me necessary. And other standard books tho' good, do not seem to me the *best*.

The second method and the best in my judgment is this, to put myself under the direction of some well qualified person, probably a clergyman, who would direct and hear all my studies, and as to the classical languages, they might be a part, but not the necessary step before any others might be taken.

My object would be to put myself under the direction of a man whose capacities and learning should be such as to materially benefit me as a person.

This is the idea I have. Much of it of course will be modified and changed in a practical arrangement of this character. So far as I have a positive end in view, I have laid it before your observation and with it the means which seem to me in my case the best to accomplish the end in view.

Your counsel as a friend, as a spiritual parent to me, with deep gratitude for what you have already done for me, with love and reverence for you as a man, I affectionately ask your wise counsel. Be not backward in speaking to me your frankest and plainest thoughts. Whatever your sense of duty may lead you to say, be assured, will excite in me a greater love and deeper gratitude for your true kindness for me. You know my position. I have *brothers*, but no parent in this sense, and to you, dear friend, I am led to look for one. Will you be one to me? I trust you will find me to pay respect and reverence for all your counsels and bear a love to you as a true son.

You need not hesitate in giving your opinion for my brothers' sakes. They are willing. Brother John is interested that whatever course I feel called to adopt to help and encourage me onwards. I have spoken to them and opened my mind to them, and as my intentions have become plainer they are satisfied and ready to aid if necessary my attempts. On this point all is harmony.

It is hard for one to make a true estimate of himself; he either under or over rates himself. Now if you think I have not the capacity to be of use in the cause which I am about devoting myself to, be perfectly candid to me, and tell me so in plain English. The self-denial, the singleness of aim, the devotion of time to this one object, and many more difficulties which will have to be encountered, are not hid from my vision nor do they daunt my courage.

We each have our object in life, and if we find ourselves misplaced we must put ourselves in the right place, if place is necessary to it.

Francis tells me your Review goes well. Your article in the next on Kant I expect a great treat from. Metaphysics and philosophy seems to be out of fashion. Channing (Wm. H.) is drawn farther and farther into the Fourier movement. Without religion as the basis, and that presupposes the church, seems to me there is no hope for these movements. Our family are all in good health. Business with us is quite good. Remember me to your wife.

Truly yours,

ISAAC.

REV. O. A. BROWNSON,
Chelsea, Mass.

NEW YORK, March 15, 1844.

My nearest friend,—Your letter came to hand last evening, and I take the earliest opportunity this morning, to answer it.

“It is impossible for me to express how much encouragement, hope, and firmness of purpose your letter gave to my convictions, and to what extent your advice harmonizes to suit my wants,

First of all, I will briefly relate to you what I have been doing since I wrote you last, and this will at the same time answer the questions which you put to me concerning my union with the church.

Some few months ago there was published in the N. Y. Churchman a letter addressed to a Sincere Enquirer. This letter met my warmest, dearest sympathies, and seemed to accord with that philosophy of the church which I have been taught by you. If I can get a copy of it, I will send it with this letter. To the author of this letter, who I found to be through Rev. B. F. Height, the Rev. Wm. A. Morris of Carlisle, Penn. to him I have addressed a letter, the purport of which I shall recite to you.

After giving an apology for addressing him without any previous acquaintance, and expressing my sympathy with the views in his letter, I gave him a brief statement of the views I hold in relation to the church and its office. I said. That all outward reforms presuppose an inward regeneration of the Heart as their cause and foundation, and no institution but the church has the power to effect this, nor has this aim in view: therefore I would yield myself up wholly to the Church as the only means of

redeeming the Race from the innumerable evils under which we now suffer. I said. Having mixed in the social and political movements of our time more than most young men who are led to enter the Christian ministry, at the same time feeling and perceiving the spiritual view to be the highest, I would always have in view the embodying these higher and diviner ideas in all our spheres of activity, that I would never forget that the kingdom of Heaven is to be established upon Earth, that I would never lose sight of bringing down the Heavenly Jerusalem on this Planet. I said. At present I am not a member of any branch of the Catholic Church, but whatever branch I may be led to unite myself to, it would be as a Catholic to labor for the reunion and catholicity of the Church as the prerequisite to all other movements which have for their object the advancement of Humanity. I told him my views and sympathies were with the movement of the Oxford divines, and in a greater degree with that portion of them who exhibited a greater friendliness and love toward the other branches of the Catholic Church, and that I had no sympathy with protestantism considered as placing the individual judgment above or equal to the voice of the universal church, and I considered this had been as fatal to real progress as its philosophy is unsound. I concluded with stating the object of my letter, which was whether he would be willing to become a Tutor to me etc. The purport of the practical part of the letter was this, that if he had any willingness to accede to such a relation it would give me great pleasure to have a personal interview with him, Rev. Mr. Height sent a letter with mine to Rev. Mr. Morris.

Most probably I will call to see Bishop Hughes to see what facilities the Catholic Church affords for me. I am a Catholic, and believe that the Roman church has preserved the true Catholic faith so far as her General Councils are concerned.

It is not in my contemplation to join either the Roman or Anglican church until I have made some considerable progress in my studies. One of these two *will be my choice*, and it depends much upon the result in the meantime of the Oxford movement in the Anglican church whether there even will be room for me to choose.

Your statement of your present necessity of directing your attention to the Greek language, and your advice to me to prepare myself at first in the Greek and Latin will stimulate me to make this an object in my study of the first importance. I will not decide upon my plan until I see you personally, which I hope to do soon, or receive from you your advice upon whatever scheme may seem best for me.

I shall never consider any amount of time lost in the preparation if it really helps me to the aim in view. I will keep you informed from time to time what progress I make in this purpose.

Dear friend, you perfectly unman me when you speak of gratitude to us. How much are we indebted to you for! 'Tis I who should speak. What have you not been to me? and where would I have been if it had not been that your home had been offered so kindly to me? Alas! God knows.

Brother John having some business with Bishop Onderdonk, in conversing on different topics your name happened to be mentioned. The Bishop spoke of your

views freely and said he read your Review with great interest. He expressed his belief that time would bring you into the fold of the church.

There is some talk of Channing's giving up his efforts here and going on to Brook Farm this Spring. Last Sunday morning the text of his sermon was first seek the Kingdom of Heaven and then all things will be added thereunto. His sermon was first seek all outward things and the kingdom of Heaven will come. Fourierism.

Very truly your son in spirit and love,

ISAAC.

That your Review has been so far successful is very good news to me.

Have you, dear friend, any place or person in view that you would recommend me? However I shall write you soon or see you.

NEW YORK, Mar. 25, 1844.

Dear Friend,—I have been waiting patiently since I last wrote to you for an answer to the letter I wrote to Mr. Morris, and yesterday I received a very frank and interesting letter from him. You will perceive in what he says there is no opening there with him for me. He says that he has only been three years in the holy orders, and that his meagre attainments have been made he hardly knows how, and that his theological library might be carried in his arms. How can I, he says, direct you in a course of theological study when I have myself pursued none deserving that name save what I should now flee from as the pestilential breath of antichrist. Of books, he says, I know very little. So far as I have

mastered the Catholic faith, I have done it since I was in orders, and in the midst of peculiarly harrassing parochial labors. My great guides have been the creeds, the liturgy of our church, and the New Testament. As illustrating these I have read Newman's Parochial Sermons and within the last year past Hooker's celebrated Fifth Book. He says though he has read little, he has thought much. He then states how he proceeded. In speaking of the Athanasian Creed, which seemed aimed especially at Nestorianism, I wished then to discover the great evil of Nestorianism, of which people now-a-days seem to be marvellously indifferent. It asserted our Lord's Godhead: might not that be sufficient to save it from an anathema? The church had not thought so. What next? It affirmed a human personality. Now this did not seem to interfere with Lutheranism, nor any phase of Lutheranism. It did not seem especially to disturb what has passed for High-Church doctrine, and yet the error did oppose some truth *necessary to the integrity of the faith*. It asserted that the man Christ Jesus was one of Adam's species, whereas nothing is more distinctly asserted in Scripture than that instead of being one of Adam's kind He is Himself *Another Adam*, the beginning of a new creation, the fountain head of a new Humanity, which is predestined to be immortal, incorrupt, pure, and perfect as Himself is, nay absolutely like Him in body and in soul. Here then I arrived at the foundation of the sacramental system etc. What think you, dear friend, of the letter I sent to you of his? and what think you of the above? He tells me he wrote a letter to the Churchman in reply to some strictures made upon the one he published by a Catholic paper, which the

Editor has not published, which he desires me to get and to read. He kindly invites me to come and see him after Easter and says, It does not seem that I can do any thing but talk to you, I may thus give you some right principles which may safely guide you, and he recommends me to enter the General Theological Seminary.

I called to see Bishop Hughes last week. The requisites for a candidate for holy orders in the R. C. Church are first a two years previous membership of the church and a recommendation and certificate of fitness of character, ability, etc., all from his priest. This is all very proper and necessary to the well-being of the order, and so far it commands my judgment ; but, dear friend, I am not prepared ; in other words, I cannot join this church without wilfulness, and it is impossible for me to do this, at the present time, tho' probably I may eventually be led to take this path. In the meantime I would be employing my time for such a probable event, and the way in which I think best for me to do this is to study the Greek and Latin languages as you have advised. Now the only question before my mind is, *where* can I best do this ? Here at home there is something to be said in favor, but I think there is more that can be said against it. There is every temptation to keep me from, instead of inducing me to study. Hence I have thought it best to look for some better place, one more conducive to the object in view. Where is this to be found ? this is the question I wish to submit to you for your advice. Much depends upon my industry, but not a little depends on the person who shall be selected as a teacher. But one place is now before my mind, and that is in Concord

under George Bradford. He has got a small school there which occupies him about three hours a day, and I have understood from other persons that he is desirous to teach the languages when unoccupied with his school. The advantages that this presents to me are these. He will take an interest in learning me the languages in the shortest time, but *none the less thorough*. Instead of mere hearing me recite certain lessons, he will be personally interested in giving all possible knowledge which he possesses, which will speed and give me a sound knowledge of the languages. Then I shall not be confined to an hour or an half hour or any definite time of recitation, but the object will be to receive as much as possible, not necessarily limited to time but capacity. And last but not least in my mind is that I shall not be *so very far* from the invaluable *influence of your mind*; this last will be to me a means of gaining more in one moment than in days of indefatigable toil. I am not unconscious nor blind to the transcendental atmosphere which Concord is famous for ; but, dear friend, with you as my friend, and the experience, life, and philosophy which I have, I trust I shall be impregnable to all such influences, especially as I have not been unacquainted with them heretofore. However I leave this all to your better judgment and decision. My object is to seek the best conditions for the purpose I now have in view, and that is to study the dead languages in order to prepare myself for a regular theological training. All other conditions and advantages I feel bound to sacrifice to this, however I might desire other advantages. I will repeat the question, to whom and where shall I go that I may in the best and speediest manner receive that instruction that is needful for me?

I have scarcely left room to speak of your Review which we received yesterday. The first article that I read was No Church, no Reform.* You have brought the question between the Fourierists and yourself to an issue which must call them out before the public in a way not altogether pleasant to them: It has seemed to me for some time back it wanted one who had the ability—to bring them to the point you have done, to bring their well-meant theories to an end in the public mind. Mr. Channing will probably be supported here another year. To-day I shall be able to read your first article. I am engaged in reading Kant's Theory of Religion within the bounds of Pure Reason. It is pure Rationalism with a curious mixture of belief in a sort of Catholic faith in the universality, etc., of the church.

My action will be delayed until I receive an answer to this. I am very sorry that I am a source of so much trouble to you, and hope to be worthy of your regard.

DEINER SOHN ISAAC.

CONCORD, April 4, 1844.†

Dear friend,—On Wednesday afternoon I returned to this retired and quiet spot now called my home. Before I went I called at Mr. Greene's two or three times to see you, but found you not.

My attractions were so strong towards home no inducement seemed great enough to retain me any longer in Boston. Here my time is occupied in reading a little, studying less, and thinking and contemplating the remainder of the time, which is the most. My study is.

* Brownson's Works, vol. iv, p. 496.

† Postmarked June 1.

to me now what my labor was to me a year ago. Then no motives, and I felt not a few, which *should* have led me to labor, did not, and now with all the desire I have to learn the languages and the certain knowledge I have of their great advantage, do not bear upon me with sufficient force to direct and confine my attention to them. The union, I feel conscious, with spirit is a source of so much more life in every direction that all other sources seem to me lifeless and dry compared with this. I deplore deeply that I cannot continue the studies for which I came here with that energy and application which they require, and my hope was that this would be possible without interrupting this other willess life, but such seems not to be the case, and what else can one do than accept things as they are with as good a grace as possible? This willess life is making silent, irresistible progress within me, and when I speculate about the end to which it may probably lead me, sometimes there seems reason to hope and smile, and at other times equal reason to weep and to sigh.

All that which tends to more perfectly unite me to this spiritual life, interests, quickens, and fills me with energy of intellect, and sentiment, and otherwise all seems dead. If I make the attempt to force myself to study it is as if my whole mind vanished, and all is blank and void before me, thought, memory, and feeling is gone, and I stand alone like one without soul or heart and empty body void of any sense.

I ask no more questions, nor attempt by reason to foreknow the future, but am simply resigned to give all up to the invisible guide who alone is the true guider to right issues. Man rules his destiny only by perfect sub-

mission to God, or by perfect coöperation with his will.

At present there is no objective purpose before me at which I aim, not that my love for man is less, or that my earnestness is the least abated; this is not so, never have I been conscious of living such an earnest, deep, effectual life as I am now conscious of living. My very existence seems to be one perpetual act, and every day is filled with life, love, and wisdom. 'Tis true this is not the ordinary way in which young men prepare themselves for benefitting man, and I may be laboring under a self-delusion; if this be delusion, it has never so well counterfeited the truth, and I trust some friendly hand will strip it of its garb, for I trust I am not so far gone as not to recognize it when it stands before me in its naked colors.

That a certain amount of intellectual culture and information are necessary and essential to certain public offices to which many fine young men devote themselves to no one with their eyes open can bring into question. This I have been pretty conscious of and this has placed me in my present position. My object was to acquire this needy information, so that if in the end I should be directed to any place that would require this, I would not be unprepared, and I have very partially laid before your mind the attempt. With the consciousness of the responsibility of this deeper life, in memory and in presence of its fruits to me, I cannot say that I would have it otherwise than what it is, and my hope is that ere long I may be able to devote more time to study than it is possible for me now to do.

There seems to me two points of view from which most men start in life. One sees an object before him which he has the aspiration to secure, and to this end he

sacrifices all that is in his way that he may secure it. The other is the perfect submission to the will of God and His purposes without the pursuit of an outward end. The first may be successful in the worldly sense, but the latter, if true, must receive the approbation of God.

Let me not talk any farther on this matter to you, dear friend, whose wisdom in these matters is so great, and whose time I feel unworthy to engage with my private life, or what I have to say. My sense of nothingness increases upon me, and I trust Abraham's hand will not be staid as of old. Much soul delight it would be to offer up this life for the sake of man with heaven in view, or if not worthy of this privilege of one still greater—to be foresaken by all, Men, Heaven, Angels, God, All. It is the nobleman that God calls to great, to impossible deeds. I love you, my dear friend, with a very deep love, and never think of you without an irrepressible gratitude.

Yours truly,

ISAAC.

REV. O. A. BROWNSON,
Chelsea, Mass.

NEW YORK, April 6, 1844.*

Dearest friend,—Chas. Dana offers an opportunity of my sending to you a few words which I will write as I must in some haste. The Fourier convention I have attended its two days deliberations which doubtless have been the same in substance except a smaller audience and less enthusiasm than the one held lately in Boston. Those who did not assume it as the basis of their remarks

* Postmarked New York, July 6.

laid it down as their fundamental basis that the evil in the world is not the result of inward individual depravity but the result of the outward arrangement of things—this was affirmed by Ripley downwards. The doctrine of unity and diversity of action in the industrial world as held out by these men what is it but Catholicity in the industrial world? So it strikes me and I am not a little astonished to see the effects these views have had upon them. It has rid them of their transcendentalism, of their protestantism, and most of their pernicious results. It seems to me I have greater hopes of Mr. Ripley than I ever had. He is now laboring on the results which the Catholic Church of Christ is destined to realize in time not on the cause which only can do this. Not that I believe in the innumerable speculations of Fourier that these men in their present movement will effect much by their plans, tho' I do firmly believe it will be the means of opening their eyes to those Catholic principles developed in the history of the Church.

I am daily more and more convinced of the opinion you expressed in your letter that only in the Church can we possibly benefit the age in the highest degree. Ripley has spoken once or twice with an earnestness and enthusiasm very great. This is his apprenticeship for the priesthood. Those who have tried to succeed in reform out of the church and have failed know the value of its aid and its life—those who have been in the church physically speaking leave it just at the time they should feel the most indebted to it and remain to realize in it its life. These men seem to me nearly ready to enter society and the church as true and efficient members.

It would have been to me a moment of great pleasure to have met you before now to have your advice upon the subject of the plans in view of my education, but certain difficulties have prevented me. I have made no further efforts since I last wrote you except to write Mr. Bradford to know of him if he had the time and disposition to teach me the languages if I should come to Concord, but of my coming I made no assurance. I have thought it very probable that you might conceive of a plan which would be preferable to the one I submitted to you. When you have the leisure will you let me know how this is?

The questions between the Anglican and R. C. Church have mostly occupied my attention of late, and the impressions that I have been left are that the conduct of the Anglican clergy in the time of the reformation is to be severely condemned and that the conduct of the Pope is not altogether reconcilable with real Christian Catholic principles. I don't know but that the *court* of Rome has claimed a power insupportable on the true grounds of the church. Is he more than an executive head of the counsels the constitution of the church? The organization of the church has it not been very incomplete, indefinite? and has not this been the chief cause of so many schisms in its body? Has not the Anglican Church preserved the true Catholic faith? If the Anglicans have sinned in separating themselves from the Roman See are not the Roman Catholics extremely blameable in some of their practices? The former error is vital and not to be too much feared, still it is not a heresy in faith, is it? But these questions I would trouble you with if you will hear them when I shall see you.

I will send the report of the doings in the convention in the Herald. As for its correctness you know how the papers generally report. For Ripan read Ryckman. For Hecker read Hempel.

My faith in Christ, my interest in the church, my hope in it as the means of redeeming mankind, my willingness to leave all for the field of the church, increases upon me daily, deepens continually.

Your dear son in the love of Christ,

ISAAC.

Since I last wrote to you I have spoken to Mr. Ripley touching the social movement now in progress and have seen Dr. Seabury; the information which I have received from them I thought might not be uninteresting to you.

In my last I spoke the associative movement has assumed of late, especially with some of the interested individuals, and was agreeably confirmed in this by the conversation I had yesterday afternoon with our friend. He gave me to understand that his religious views had been considerably modified since I had last seen him, and tho' I perceived he has not the Catholic understanding of the church, and still the time is not far distant, it seems to me, when his eyes will be opened and he be prepared to embrace it. One point he has gained, and that is, he now sees the place for the Church and the necessity for ministers. They seem to be intent about exhibiting life, nor caring about the means of receiving it. Tho' they, that is, the best and wisest of them, recognize Christ as the life and light of men, they do not perceive the mediatorial office of the visible church. It

astonishes me repeatedly to hear from their best speakers such sound fundamental Catholic views on some points mixed up with the most contradictory and irreconcilable statements. I have never heard from any one man's lips such heterogeneous and opposite views without any unity or harmony in principle or arrangement as I have and do constantly hear from the lips of Mr. Channing in his preaching. One moment it is Catholic, the next ultra protestant; then human depravity, then the integral harmony of the passions; then the immediate communion with God, again the opposite, and so through all modern theories and philosophies without any reconciliation or unity in result.

Dr. Seabury is one of the most social and familiar men that I have ever met. He said to me that he had read your last Review all through with great delight; but, says he, I am a little afraid of Brownson, he looks too strong towards Rome. Now I am not, said he, opposed to Rome in any essential point of faith, nor do I seek to build up the Anglican Church, to which I am attached, as the Catholic, but the assumption of power assumed by the Popes of Rome, the oaths of allegiance of the bishops to the pope, and his infallibility and many practices which have grown up under her system I do not like. She presents, said he, many attractive features, more so than our church. I admit, said he, our ceremonies and discipline are not so grand and have been neglected etc., but, said he, we cannot accept the church of Rome as she now is, and I am afraid that the influence of Brownson upon the Roman church is such as to make her cling to her exclusiveness and her practices which are not Catholic. We accept all the Catholic Councils;

but, says he, since the great separation of the Grecian Church there could not be a catholic council. He even said he had no objection of accepting the Council of Trent, but the interpretation given to it by the Church of Rome the Anglican Church might in some minor points differ from it. He is perfectly willing and desires that there should be called an œcumenical council of those branches of the church which have preserved the Catholic faith and restore the visible unity of the church. His views struck me as extremely liberal, broad, and without much sectional feeling.

Tomorrow morning it is my intention to go and see Mr. Morris and probably spend a few days with him, and when I return if I shall not receive any news from you which will alter my purpose I should like to come to Boston to see you. You will find in the Regenerator an address by Mr. Smolenski. He is a man of remarkable learning and of curious genius. Like many other good intentioned men the church is to him only the views of its members. He says he has the spirit of Christ and is sent by him as the Messenger of Peace, and all that do not aid him in the great enterprise he excommunicates.

In the bond of Christ,

ISAAC.

Tuesday, 7, '44. (Postmarked, Boston, April 12.)

Remember me to your kind wife.

This is election day, the native Americans have made a serious inroad upon both parties. We may lose the city, it is probable.

NEW YORK, May, 1844, Thursday (Postmarked May 21).

Dear friend,—Since I last wrote to you Dr. Vethake has called to see me. He said that he and his whole family had determined to be united to the Catholic Church. His eldest daughter had resolved to do so whether he did or no. He is not yet in, but it is seldom that one that has made up his mind so far, having passed through what the doctor has, that recedes from his determination. Brother George will be confirmed on Trinity Sunday with me at the same time.

I see by the public papers that you are to deliver an oration at Baltimore sometime in July. If this be so, you will, I suppose, pass through this city and probably stay a few days with us, and then I shall have the opportunity of seeing you without going to Boston.

The German Priest that was mentioned in my last belongs to the order of Redemptorists of St. Alphonsus, of which there is a small missionary body from this society from Austria in our city devoted to the German population. I have visited them quite frequently since then, and have spent some good hours with one of their body. It happens just in my present state of mind concerning the choice of vocation, that this meeting with this one has been quite providential to me. He loaned me a book of St. Alphonsus written on purpose for one who is about making choice of a vocation in the religious life. The Priest himself has been much help to me. However, books and men are books and men, and it requires as much right judgment to discriminate in their advice what strictly is applicable to one as it does in them to give right advice. This is the position in which I now feel

myself in, unable to choose and a perfect willingness to obey. I will knock, seek, pray, ask, for God has promised to give a response to all these.

Does the church in your diocese celebrate this month as the month of Mary? If so, you know more than I can tell you about this beautiful, impressive ceremony.

Question. Can all that is worthy among the Greeks Hindoos, and Romans be accounted for satisfactorily by the doctrine of primitive revelation and the amount of primitive virtue not lost by the Fall? When I look at some of their attainments in arts, in morals, and even in right dogmas in religion, I am astonished and ask myself the question I have put. Do you know of any work or writer that throws any light on this subject? this very question? I think that I shall find much in them if ever I am able to read the primitive Fathers who had to battle with Heathenism, and overthrew it on this point. Will this not be so? I want to see a generous appreciation of the Heathen world, such only as a Catholic can give, for the dogmas of the Catholic Church are the only answer that have answered the problem of this World at least, and the destiny of men, without denying what is, and what has been, and affirming what is not, nor never has been.

My time is as it was, wholly devoted to study. It is late in life for me to commence, but in the end it may be, if rightly seen, all for the best. Sometimes I now think I can see it so. This afternoon I purchased a copy of Cicero to commence in on Monday next. I have not got far in Cæsar, not much more than half of the first book, but this change is made in order to give a better arrange-

ment to the classes. My decision will necessarily take me from the city. This is not the best place for me to be in in the world.

Sincerely,

ISAAC.

(Not dated, but postmarked Boston, June 30.)

Dear friend,—On Thursday morning I left Worcester for New York, and this is the reason why I did not write to you from Worcester, having gone from there sooner than I had anticipated. I returned to Boston before I came on here, and stopped at Mr. Greene's in hope of seeing you, but did not, and my time was too short for me to go to Chelsea.

The college* is very finely situated on Pokachoag hill which commands a very extensive and pleasant scenery. The professors, or scholastics, as they term them, you are aware are Jesuits, and they seem well prepared to fill their proper offices. There are there now 25 scholars and students, whose range of studies are from the simplest to the most profound. They adapt themselves to the simplest branches of education. No scholar is taken under eight years of age. Of the twenty-five there are I think no more than five or eight young men, the rest average from the age of eight to twelve and fourteen. They get up in the morning about 5 o'clock, hear mass which takes them a half hour, then study one hour before taking breakfast. After breakfast they go to the chapel inside of the college to say prayers, and then they are given an hour or a half, I do not recollect

* College of the Holy Cross, at Worcester.

which, for recreation. After their time for recreation has elapsed they are called to their recitations: Before and after each meal, excepting when mass is said, which is said every morning previous to breakfast, they all go to the chapel to say prayers, and also previous to their retiring to bed in the evening 8 o'clock. After dinner they have an hour and a half more for amusement, then they are called to the study room, for they all study in one room, quite large, each having a desk, and there is one who they call a prefect who sits by a desk as in our public schools to oversee them. Their diet is what you would call a very generous one. The boys seemed very happy and full of spirits, and no restraint is put upon their innocent freedom. The place, as it now is, is better adapted to such as they now have their boys, and I feel quite assured that if your wife should make them a visit and see the order, the cleanliness, and the spirit of the place she would be pleased with the college. There are no women there for obvious reasons. Protestant slander would be ready on any pretext to injure them and cast suspicion and vile abuse upon them. The professors that I had the pleasure to speak to were well educated in the circle of Catholic education, which seems to be the scriptural and historic grounds of the church. As for its philosophic basis they seem to me profoundly ignorant, and so long as the conversation was kept within their circle they were at home; otherwise they behaved as strangers. Their method is a very short one in settling difficult points,—scripture and the church,—not appreciating any other method, however important and profound it may be, to the welfare and success of the church, but a new generation must take their place if Catholicism

is to be reëstablished in the world. I feel so in their presence that if it was to them that I was to be united I should shrink, but it is not to them, but the church. These men *seem to me* wanting that vital consciousness of divine eternal life and high spiritual aspirations which have animated so many of the children of the true church. I had to ask them repeatedly if that was the ground on which they based a true Christian life, the lowest and the least that the church demands of us. Understand me, I believe these very men have many moral virtues which if I knew would command my deepest respect and reverence for their individual characters; but I wish they did not take so much snuff, and that too even in the midst of that holy awful sacred sacrifice, the Mass. Oh my dear friend, there must be something deeper and more eternal than what we see with the outward senses that can attract a soul to the church as she now is in this country.

To-morrow I am going to see Rev. Mr. McCloskey. I have delayed it that nothing might interfere with the duties that may be required of me when I commence. To my friends I have not spoken a word respecting my union with the church. The life that leads me to the church is deeper than all thought and expression, and if I attempt to give a reason or to explain why I am led to the church, afterwards I always feel that it never reaches the reason and I feel its inadequacy. Let men say as they may, it is only by grace that we come to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. You will be so kind as to excuse the hurry of this. I have an opportunity of

sending this with a friend, and after having seen Rev. Mr. McCloskey I will write to you again.

Very truly yours in the deepest love,

ISAAC.

NEW YORK, July 15, 1844.

Dear Friend,—Shortly after I wrote to you a fortnight ago, I went to see Bishop McClosky. The bishop pleased me personally more than any Catholic I have met. He is a man of wide information, mild and affectionate in his intercourse, one in whose company I hope to be much benefitted. He spoke of you with profound respect and said he read your Review with great interest and pleasure. I have received from him some books to read, one of which I think worth while mentioning to you. Its title is, *Considerations on the Eucharist*, by Abbé P. H. Gerbert, translated from the French. He is a profound writer, and the book is well written. Bishop Fenwick has it no doubt in his library.

This morning I went again to see the bishop. He has been, ever since I first saw him, at Troy, where he went to consecrate a new church. In eight or ten days I expect to receive conditional baptism.

I went to see Rev. Mr. Height last week. He took up the objections I had made to the Anglican Church. The historical ones we did not enter upon, for we had spoken of them heretofore, and as to those touching their delapidated state of affairs, their neglect of discipline, and want of faith in their church of certain admitted Catholic doctrines etc., etc., this he did not dispute. He loaned me two books, and we parted friendly. Mr.

Channing I have not met since my return. Few words that dropped from his mouth in conversation will give you an idea where he now stands. He said, if the institutions of the middle ages had been perpetuated and perfected they would satisfy all his hopes and aspirations. He did not think it necessary to resuscitate them and did not know of anything which would answer as a substitute for them. He looks for a *something* to come to answer his heart, and does not think the Catholic Church is the thing, and said the movement of the day needed a more spiritual life to succeed to any great extent. Thus much, dear friend, esoterically.

My time since I have been here has been partially engaged in the business tho' my heart is far from it as ever. I look to my union with the C. Church as my first step, and this as the condition of knowing the next. Farther than this I do not ask. Conditions for a contemplative life for a certain length of time under the discipline of the church is what my heart demands, but this I am prepared to sacrifice if I can. All that I ask is conditions for the realization of the expression of the life which I feel an imperative call upon me to live. I do not ask these of others, believing that all true life will create its own conditions. At present I do not see what I can do and be useful, but this does not trouble me, feeling assured that obedience to heaven will more than give me what my hopes dare dream. I am in the path; obedience, fortitude, faith, and courage will secure the rest.

That the inspiration of Christianity is the cause of modern civilization and improvement I have no doubt, and believe the Church the centre from which flows all

progress in art, science, and industry, and the best method to labor for the good of the Race is in the cause and advancement of the reign of the Church. That Christianity has been the highest source of inspiration to the inborn capacity of genius is evidently proven by their highest devotion to the expression of its life in all the variety of genius. Until we perceive heaven we cannot feel the loss we have sustained in our fall.

Will you be so kind, dear friend, as to put those books in a wrapper and mark them for Charles Dana and have them left to Miss Peabody's before the 1st of September, which I loaned from Mr. Parker? He is, I believe, to be home then and Charles wished me to return them to him by that time.

The family are all well.

Sincerely yours,

ISAAC.

Dear friend,*—This morning I go to the Cathedral to receive the Sacrament of Baptism; to-morrow to the Confession; after that receive Confirmation; it is a rule of the church to defer the baptism of adults for a short time that the intentions of those who solicit baptism may be better ascertained.

The life surrounding me here is not such as engages my attention any length of time. The object for which it is placed is not mine. And as for the mere physical subsistence this labor and waste of time is not necessary. We never shall labor for better physical circumstances. The conditions for progress in spiritual life are in inverse ratio to those for physical indulgences. In the worst

* No date; postmark illegible

physical conditions we have enough, and often more than enough, to overcome even the temptations they present. We feel best when freest of external conditions. Jesus had power to lay down and take up his temporal life at pleasure. Men know not what man is until they are one with Jesus. The conditions for receiving spiritual life are not consistent with the gratification of the physical wants as man's nature now is. Until his nature is restored to its primeval innocence its likings are not all lawful.

I have an idea of a project which I think would be more than one way beneficial to me. It is to make a penitential journey to Europe, even as far as Rome. To work my passage over the sea, and to work, walk, and beg whatever distance I may go. A better penance I cannot think of. It is better, much better than being a recluse either here or in a cloister. Do you not think so? This project is only in thought, in imagination. I have my eye upon one person who can live on bread and water and sleep upon the earth who can walk his share; if he should consent to go, I might go. It is Henry Thoreau I mean. We see not why pilgrimages may not be made now as well as they were in the Ages of the Faith. If this thought becomes more serious with me I shall inform you if so.

Mornings I engage myself as far as possible in the business; afternoons I have chiefly to employ as I wish. I find difficulties sufficient in the circumstances I am now in, but the way in which I would meet them is not the way others would, and as we are three and not one I would not disturb any arrangements, preferring them to be as they are. The world is wide on purpose to give freedom.

Probably I shall take up my studies if I remain, and can do so. We are willing to undertake any discipline which shall bring about this end if desirable. My time has been chiefly employed in reading books concerning the sacraments, disciplines, and ceremonies of the Church. Our feelings increase with the knowledge of the Catholic Church. (We feel an inward constraint to use the plural pronoun, we know not why.)

Digby, the author of *Mores Catholici*, became a Catholic in preparing himself to refute Milner's *End of Controversy*. He was one of the finest and most pious scholars of Coleridge, and was chosen for that purpose.

Your blessing upon me, dear friend. I must now leave you to go and receive baptism.

ISAAC.

July 23.

Do not put yourself to any trouble in answering what I now say. It will be time enough when I shall feel more certain of acting as I have suggested. It is possible to be sure of my acting sooner than I imagine. I shall enquire more about the matter. My confessor will be home in a week or so. You know if I should think of joining such an order as the Redemptorists if it were found that I might be useful in this country they would send me here. The only reason, or at least the one that influences me most is that I feel the need of being under stronger Catholic influences than are, so far as my experience goes, in this country. I only suggest the R. — not that I have spoken with them about the matter or any decided in my own mind. I would be consumed.

by God, and the speediest means to this end is what I eagerly seek for. I do not find here the room to lose my life. I feel the need of being met. If I am deluded, then I need something to be laid upon me to show up my delusion. Who will take me in hands? I want some one to kill me stone dead, or make me cry out, enough, enough. If this desire is wrong I must be commanded to resist it. If I need restraint, it must be laid upon me. The Church is all. I feel the worst in it, and I do not wish to be so, therefore I cry for her help. I want her to crush me, so that she may be all in me, which she now is not. There is no use of compromise. There can be no looking back. I want a discipline that sinks deeper than what I have yet experienced. I have too much liberty. This liberty abridges my freedom. Too long have we been fed on pap, until we have all become whining rogues. But you see more than I can say and understand me too better, I hope. It is evident where we are. Some centuries ago this would not have been said, but been done. Our heads are much larger than our hearts. We say a good deal and live a little at least. But you see how the tide runs.

Have you seen Faber, the Anglican Minister's, Sir Lancelot? I suppose not. There are some things in it that are quite bold and tell home. But these Anglican creatures are still John Bulls. But however this book will help on the right movement. He sees and points out the promised land, and like many other of his kind are willing to die this side of it. One is tempted to say they don't see it. In part they don't. And yet they see as those who see and do not. He speaks of the Anglican Church as the "offended." Of Luther he says, in speak-

ing of the "inane self-praise and self complacence vile that corroding lies in that church, engendered of that dark and atheist creed which an apostate monk three ages back, begot through his lust-blinded intellect." "Seek reconciliation with the offended church, minding that hour when Christendom arose and shook thee from her as a leprous thing." There are spots in the book that will pay a Catholic heart for reading. Yet withal he submits his conscience to this leprous thing. Probably he knows and is aware that this poor creature is dead dumb, not having the organs of speech.

I will either write or come to you soon.

Very truly,

ISAAC.

Tuesday, 29 July.

Dear friend,—When I last wrote to you I had then so far decided in favor of St. Sulpice. Now, if nothing interferes with me, I expect to go on this Friday with Mr. McMaster and Mr. Walworth to join the Redemptorists. The reason for this is simply that I have given up all idea of becoming one of the secular clergy. If I should receive from you any reasons that are convincingly in favor of any other order, I should consider my step. You spoke to me of the Dominicans, and that Bishop Fitzpatrick tho't well of them, and as their aim is not much unlike that of the Redemptorists, if there were any grounds why they should be preferred to the society of St. Liguori I would not hesitate in giving myself up to them. You know my noviciate will give me the opportunity of choice. Tho' the Redemptorists do not present

to me the external attractions such as a residence at Paris or Rome would, yet these are not the objects which should influence my decision. I saw Bishop Hughes this morning, and he approves my choice. I shall feel freer now, being freed from all monetary relations with the world. I go without a regret of leaving this continent or all that it contains. If ever I should be sent back to it, as I may be, it would be my joy to be spent in its true enlightenment and progress. But the Catholic lives but for one object, be he in China or at the opposite hemisphere. I do not expect to stay over next Friday or Saturday at the farthest; the provincial general goes on the 16th of August. If I should remain to go with him, then I probably would make you a visit. But this is not at all probable. Will you then write to me immediately and send me the watch. O how I should be pleased to receive from Bishop Fitzpatrick his blessing before I go. He will give it to me tho' I be not visibly present. Mr. McMaster is a very fine and talented man. He is a convert from the Puseyites, a correspondent of Newman, Oakely, etc. Walworth is the son of the Chancellor of our city, an earnest and serious young man. We will be good companions for each other. Walworth is too a convert. They both sacrificed much in this world, much more than I for the love of Christ.

My mother and John feel very bad about my going; brother George not so much. George is alone. You will be his friend, and give him what you know he needs, encouragement.

When I am away, will you give my mother a few kind words? My going may do much good in the family.

I shall write to you again before I go. I must close to get this in this afternoon's mail.

Very truly,

ISAAC.

Dear Friend,*—One or two events of little interest since I last wrote to you impel me to write to you again. But it is more in the thought that I am writing to you than any thing else makes me do it. My present mental and moral position is one that costs me much anxious thought and often painful feeling. My activity seems all to be inward. We can neither be excited to external activity nor are we incited to it. This is not we, we know it, but know no remedy. We say, will the period of our activity ever come? We ask not in what, if it were even in the business around me. It seems the easiest act we now could do is ceasing to be at all. We seem to have stopped progress in all external life, and all our life is within another sphere. Had we the choice of something, we should have the power to do, but we are without any choice or special determination. Our spiritual discernment seems to increase, but not our power to do. We fear to wait, by waiting this may increase. We are neither enlivened by hope nor darkened by despair. We are here, is all we can say, and we would say any thing else but this. To be patient in this would to some augur indifference, and it is painful to be so, in itself, seeing as we do, the world all busy and active around us. Choose! we would rather say with a smile, strike. We have but few weak ties that bind us here. Our present life as it is we hold not dear. We

* Undated, but postmarked New York, August 17.

are inexpressible grateful for a body through which we commune and receive so much joy, knowledge and love they are debarred of who are devoid of a gift of this character. Therefore we would preserve it pure as when it first was given. But we do not feel called upon to sacrifice the man for his dress. Christianity is the love, the light and life of man, but it does not change his elementary character. Our life may be changed but the destiny of humanity is immovable, is it not? In one sense we look upon Christianity as a free inestimable gift of God to man. Man is not bestowed to it. Man's primitive nature must be gloriously great if Christ the Son of God alone could ransom it. The progress of man toward God under the influence of Christianity is like the ascension of a released spirit towards heaven. Every breath awakens new and purer being into life. We feel ever an unperceptible influence in attending the mysteries of the church. The mysteries of the church are the mediums of the mystic life. A church without mysteries is without a soul, a congregation of corpses. The facts we wished to state you were these. Dr. Vethake called here yesterday, and he has undergone a change as desirable as it is unexpected. He has got as far as Puseyism and says he is making all efforts to keep himself from Catholicism, but is sensible he is going rapidly towards that point. All his hostilities he says have ceased at once. I never saw him so happy, healthy and in good spirits. Six months will make him wholly a Catholic. In speaking with Bishop McCloskey who, I often go to see, he told me a day dream, as he called it which he had indulged respecting yourself. It was just such a dream which you have related to me of establish-

ing an American Catholic Review. He had it all mapped out in his mind, and had a fine historical Catholic scholar, who says it is his delight to handle historical subjects, as your co-editor. Spaulding the Reviewer of D'Aubigné; and you as the head editor of the Review. I wish you would see McCloskey, you would like his acquaintance better than either of the bishops you know in your vicinity or Bishop Hughes here. He spoke with great confidence of success of such a project and of the necessity of a Review of this character on this side of the Atlantic. He has a *very high* estimation of your ability.

Shall we hear from you in reply to the article in the Churchman and Phalanx *before your* next number of your Review?

If you have a few leisure moments will you write a few lines to me of ADVICE and information?

The prospect of going to Europe seems rather to increase. As yet I have not heard from H. T.

Truly,

ISAAC.

I open this letter for joy hearing that you have approached the Sacrament of Confession. Oh dear friend what unimagined peace happiness and love it is our privilege to enjoy! The Bishop told me this dear news he having heard it from one of the clergy who is here from Boston. I was admitted to the holy Eucharist to partake of the Communion last Sunday morning. Shall I not hear from you father, brother and friend soon?

What will be the character of your next number?

NEW YORK, September 5, 1844.

Dear friend,—I have received a note from Charles Dana concerning those books of Theo. Parker's, which I left with you. He says he expects Mr. Parker home soon and he desires to return them to his library before he returns. Will you be so kind as to have them left at Miss Peabody's directed to Charles as soon as you can make it convenient for you to do so ?

Yesterday I called on Bishop McCloskey. Through the travelling of the priests to and from your region he seems to pick up a little news concerning you now and then. I hear from him that you had written a reply to Dr. Seabury.* Bishops McCloskey and Hughes take a great interest in you. Bishop McCloskey said that Bishop Hughes thought of writing to you whether you would come on to New York and start a Catholic Review. There is no question Bishop Hughes is the ablest bishop we have, and that a Review started here in New York with his patronage would have much greater advantages than at any other place in the Union. You would find the heads of the Church more to your mind in New York than in Boston, it seems to me, and more able, and with greater enthusiasm to second your plans. I don't hesitate to say that they look to your union with the Christian Church as an era in Catholic America. They feel much stronger, and are disposed to break the silence which the church has suffered herself to keep. If you are disposed to restart your Quarterly under different auspices I think it would be well for you to see the Bishops of this diocese prior to the undertaking. I think

* Brownson's Works, vol. iv, p. 567.

it is very probable that Bishop Hughes will write to you soon by what Bishop McCloskey said to me. It would not be prudent, I suppose, to speak of this to any one until it comes in an official form which I have but little doubt that it will.

Do you see a Catholic paper called the Tablet printed in London? If not you should. It is edited by Mr. Lucas, the author of that letter Whittier gave you to read. I have pored over his papers with more delight and deep interest than any thing I have seen for a length of time. He grapples with the greatest questions like a master. No lack of courage in him. You must get this paper. It is mostly filled from his own pen, and it contains all the European Catholic intelligence in Religion, Art, Politics, etc., etc. He is a host. Strange that the Church should be indebted at the present day for her greatest writers, in English language at least, to converts from Protestantism. I have been reading one volume of *Mores Catholici*, English edition. It is a great luxury to read such books as these.

My project of going to Europe has so far failed. Henry Thoreau is not disposed to go, and under present circumstances I am not inclined to go on such a tour alone. This has thrown me back on the languages, which may be of more permanent good to me than the monk tour.

Dr. Vethake is travelling on foot.

All I could say I look as usual, I speak as usual, I philosophise as usual, but how changed is all within. Is it true that

Reaching above our nature does no good,
We must sink back into flesh and blood?

We feel an interior dryness and misty void, but not moved from the permanent centre. Those days are not for ever gone.

An opportunity of going to Boston by the way of Providence to-day presents itself on account of the Dorr mass meeting that almost irresistibly forces me to go.

Very truly,

ISAAC.

You will not forget those books.

NEW YORK, 29, 1844.*

Dear Friend,—The desire of informing you that I was actually engaged in doing something has been the *cause* that has prevented me from acknowledging your last letter to me sooner. After my union with the church was fully completed I asked myself, what now is my next step? What can I do? The idea of a pilgrimage seized me with much force and had I succeeded in getting a comrade in all probability I should not have been here. I did not, and the project is delayed, probably to die for ever, at least in that form. What next was there for me to do? I had already tried to reënter the pursuit of my brothers before the idea of going to Europe occurred to me, but it was a vain and useless attempt as the same thing heretofore has proven. It seems to me what the atmosphere of the air is to Mr. fish. Idleness is a mortal sin. To remain in the position I was seemed to argue that it was more the nature of a weakness than a virtue of character. What to do? To throw myself immediately in the conditions of be-

* Postmarked New York Oct. 30.

coming a servant in the church is, you are aware, quite a different thing from that of any other ministry. I was not, and am now not fully prepared to do this tho' probably may be. I may magnify the difficulties from a sense I have of my own unworthiness and the greatness of the objects before me. It is true that decision is one half, but decision to remain firmly fixed must be based upon a permanent basis, and my present state of mind is not altogether of this character. Submitting myself to that power which has guided me thus far I came to the determination of recommencing the study of the languages, and the encouragement of your letter, dear friend, added much strength to the resolution. Providence in the course of events may open the path I am to tread more clearly, and at all events, in any case, these studies cannot prove disadvantageous. We confess we act from presentiment which speaks to us in a voice tho' not audible yet absolute. We feel no self in our study; and we trust in God that we are as far from the idea of self culture as heaven is from hades. Study, pure mental study, we can conceive it to be not one of selfishness, but which to the devout soul may cost much denial and sacrifice of self-happiness. It is now better than a week that I have been studying in this city under a well qualified teacher and the difficulties that obstructed my progress in this way at the latter part of my being in Concord, and which I feared would here, so far I am extremely happy to say, have not seriously interfered with me, and I hope will not. All that I do is done with the consent and advice of my spiritual Director. You would be happy to see me. Dare I not say how much happier I should be to see you? Have I not incomparable rea-

sons for saying so? Oh, how much it adds to friendship to know that your friends behold and enjoy in common the same glorious mysteries and great blessings in Christ! A faint conception of the mystery and glory of Christ's church overpowers all mundane expression. Like Dante the great Christian poet who seemed so wrapt up in beatific vision as to be scarce able to speak audibly. Ah, what a cadence there is from the Divine Comedy to that of Paradise Lost, to that of Faust! Are there not historical pictures?

Thanks for your last Review. Our family is all well. Remember me to Mrs. O. A. B. and forgive me for not writing to you earlier.

Your most unworthy friend,

ISAAC.

November 27, 1844, N. Y.

Dear friend,—My time being so completely occupied with my studies has prevented me from writing to you as soon after my last as I have desired to do. Oh, that I could come to you. From the disharmony of the views of the society with which I am surrounded with those I hold, my communion is in consequence much restricted. All my beliefs, hopes, and aspirations find so few responses in other hearts that I feel most free when most alone from these. My faith is like a tender plant growing between rocks. The life which would ascend and burst forth in flowers is now forced beneath the soil in bulbous roots for want of genial atmosphere. It is winter now with me, the spring and summer time will come when the sap husbanded shall rise and the tree put

forth its leaves, blossoms, and its fruit. We have no word of complaint to utter. We are all so deeply at peace, and invisibly happy. We feel free from, but not indifferent to, the demands of the external world. What a work the Catholic Christian sees and has before him! How wide are the aims of protestants, of protestant education, in society, in government, from those of Catholic Christianity! Can it be, can it be that so many are led so far, far astray, we ask ourself. How sadly has piety, the love of the cross, and society degenerated under the influence of protestantism! When I contemplate the holiness, the beauty, the piety, the sweetness of the Catholic faith my heart is filled with ineffable joy, while the only redeeming feature in protestantism is that it has preserved a few traces of that from which it has fallen. He cannot be a Catholic who sees not in society as it is his work to do.

I feel deeply interested in the success of your Review. Will you be sustained? Has Seabury received it? He has not noticed its reception, nor your article. Your articles I read and reread on metaphysics, I am not satisfied until I imagine I have seized all your reasoning. The views put forth in the last number, of the inseparability of the me into faculties seemed to me very important. Speaking of Reviews, the N. A. Review, the last number, has quite a liberal article on Ignatius Loyola. The writer comes to the sage conclusion that the only way to do away with Catholicism is by living a deeper life than the Catholics. Amen we say, but it must first be got.

Dr. Vethake was here this morning and opened to me the designs of his to attempt to get the office of the

surveyor of this port if Mr. Calhoun is retained in the next administration. I think it is rather whether Mr. Calhoun will stay. The doctor is well qualified to fill the office, and will be backed by good names for the office. He wished me to ask of you whether you would give him your aid on the condition of J. C. Calhoun's remaining? the other side is hostile to the Dr. Dr's suitability for the office I think there can be no question. Brother John promises to procure some important names. What may be your pleasure I know not, but that I should be sorry to be the medium of any thing displeasing to you, this I do feel and know.

In my studies my progress is not to be complained of, all my time and attention are bent to them. I told you that I had commenced to take lessons on the piano at the same time that I commenced the other studies ; this is quite a recreation to me. I cannot, dare not, hope to see you before next summer, when I shall have liberty by vacation to do so. I have nothing to love here but ideal objects. My confessor I love, but oh, how many meanings that word love is made to bear.

Believe me to be yours always undeservedly,

ISAAC.

Remember me to your wife and your family as well.

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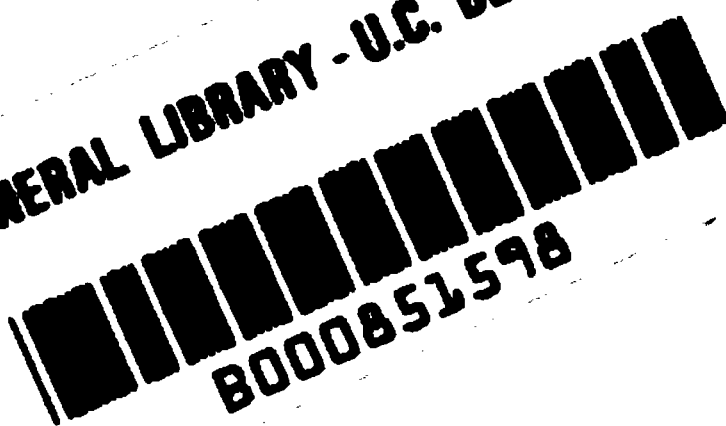
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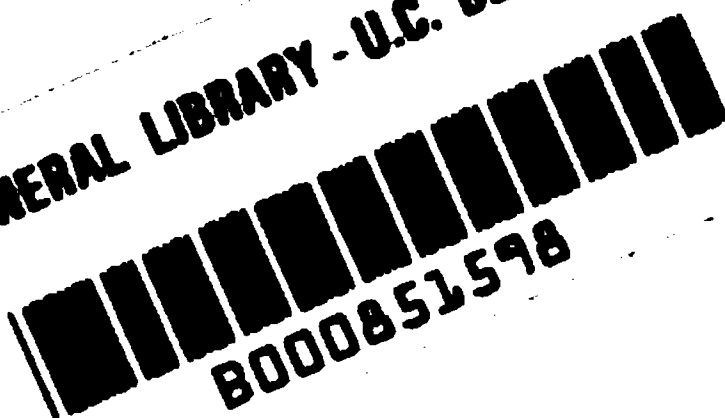


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